

Red Flags in Relationships

Healthy relationships are based on mutual respect and safety. Sometimes harmful and controlling behaviours can develop over time. This can occur in all types of relationships.

Important Things to Remember:

- Red flags are usually patterns of behaviour, not one-off events.
- Red flags can start subtly and increase in frequency or severity over time
- These behaviours can happen in all types of relationships – married, dating, casual, long-term, LGBTQI+
- It is not your fault – the person using the behaviours is responsible for their choice
- See SECASA's **What is Family Violence?** resource for more information on what to look out for

Red flags

In the beginning of a relationship, things can feel exciting and new.

Reactions and behaviours can feel like passion, protectiveness or care. Over time, these can start to feel controlling.

You might feel that your boundaries are being pushed or you are being rushed into commitment sooner than you would have expected.

You may notice that you have changed your own behaviour to avoid conflict, or you start to recognise when your partner is reacting to things that you think are minor.

Early red flags in intimate relationships

- Wanting constant communication or needing to know where you are (for example, needing to share or track your location, calling repeatedly when you don't answer)
- Becoming jealous or suspicious
- Making jokes or comments about you that put you down or make you feel uncomfortable
- Ignoring, minimising or pushing your boundaries
- Getting upset, sulking or over-reacting when you say no or say you need space
- Wanting things to move very quickly (e.g. moving in together or meeting your children early)
- Making you feel guilty for spending time with other people including friends or family

How you might feel

You might feel unsure or confused about their behaviour

You might question whether you are overreacting

You might find yourself trying to "get it right" to avoid upsetting the person

You might start doubting your own thoughts and feelings

You may feel that something doesn't feel quite right, even if you can explain why

You may notice you are starting to cover up some of their behaviours when you talk about them with other people

If you find that their behaviour is making you uncomfortable, or you are making excuses for them, it's worth paying a bit more attention to their actions

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What to do if you're starting to wonder about their behaviour

- You can take the time you need to decide next steps
- Talk to someone you trust
- If something doesn't feel right, it's okay to take a step back or seek support

Help is available:

- If you are in immediate danger – **call 000**
- For 24/7 family violence counselling support, call 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)
- For family violence support including safety planning and support to exit a relationship, call The Orange Door – visit <https://www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au/support-near-you> and enter your postcode
- You can call **8769 2200 – opt 1** to speak to a SECASA intake counsellor advocate during business hours

SECASA has a list of family violence supports [here](#)