

Someone I love has a chronic illness

Being close to someone with a chronic illness can, at times, be hard. Being kind to each other during times of high stress takes work.

Research has shown that intimate partners of people with a chronic illness often experience poorer psychological wellbeing and decreased satisfaction in their relationship. It is human to experience these feelings.

Ignoring relationship issues around intimacy and connection are not uncommon among couples and getting help can be seen as a sign of weakness.

Research suggests that taking a proactive approach to improving relationship health can have positive health outcomes for people living with chronic illness and their loved ones.

The Gottman Institute identifies successful couples as being 'intimately familiar' with each other's world, and understanding each other's goals, worries and hopes. The following tips are designed to help you focus on strengthening and improving your relationship health.

Tips for strengthening and improving your relationship health

- Think of three things that you appreciate about your partner/loved one.
- Tell your loved one what it is that you appreciate about them.
- Make time to connect with your partner; choose a simple activity such as cooking a meal or reading the paper and do it together.
- Consider the things you enjoyed together when you first met and work out a way to re-create a version of this.
- Ask your loved one 'What were the 'Top 5' moments of your day?'
- Show kindness and affection with a hug, caring words or by saying thank you.

If you would like to see a Relationships Counsellor contact **1300 364 277** or visit:

Humankind-relationships.com.au

"Couples often ignore each others emotional needs out of mindlessness, not malice"

The Gottman Institute

Relationships Australia.

