

KEEPING SAFE IN RELATIONSHIPS



**A GUIDE TO KEEPING SAFE IN RELATIONSHIPS
FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

CONSENT

Consent is an agreement between two people. This means permission between two people to do something together.

This could be for anything from holding hands, to kissing, to having sex.

Consent is really important and if someone doesn't want to do something then there is **NO** consent.

Nobody should ever be made to do something if they don't want to do it.



**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CONSENT
PLEASE SEE OUR CONSENT BOOKLET!**



ASSESSING RISK

Assessing risk means thinking about things that could go wrong in a situation.

Assessing risk is also about thinking of solutions. This means thinking about how you could stop things going wrong or fix the problem if it does happen.

Read the situation below and think about what risks there are for Mary and what she could do to be safer:



Mary has finished for the day at the day centre.

She isn't going straight home today because she is meeting someone she met online in town, it's winter.

She is meeting them outside the Town Hall and then they are going to go to the pub for a drink.

Have a look at the next page to see some examples of possible risks and solutions for Mary.

Did you think of any risks that we didn't?
If you did, well done!



IF YOU NEED HELP THINKING ABOUT THE POSSIBLE RISKS FOR MARY, TALK ABOUT IT WITH YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS OR SUPPORT WORKER!





Some risks for Mary are:

RISKS

Mary is alone.



Mary's family might not know where she is going.



Mary might not know what the person she is meeting looks like.



It is winter and may be cold and dark.



The other person might not turn up and Mary is left alone.



Mary might get drunk.



WELL DONE IF YOU THOUGHT OF ANY OF THESE



Some solutions for Mary are:

SOLUTIONS

Mary could take a friend with her who could wait until the other person turns up and they are sure Mary is safe.



Mary could tell her family where she is going and when to expect her back. Mary could also phone or text her family throughout the evening to let them know that she is safe.



Mary could ask the person she is meeting for a photo so she knows who she is looking for.



Mary could make sure she has a warm coat and arrange to meet in a well-lit area.



Mary should make sure she has enough money to get back home. Mary could also double check that she has her mobile phone and that it has enough credit in case she needs to phone someone to pick her up.



Mary could choose not to drink any alcohol or limit herself to only a few drinks.



RISKS AND SOLUTIONS TOO!



SAFE PLACES

In a relationship it is really important to meet in a safe place.

This means places where there is less risk of something going wrong.

Safe places to meet are places that are organised for public use and have a responsibility to keep people safe.

Examples of safe places are:

- Cafés
- Coffee Shops
- Community Groups
- Cinemas
- Colleges
- Day Centres

Unsafe places to meet are places where there may not be many people around or places where there are lots of drunk people.

Examples of unsafe places to meet are:

- Bars
- Parks
- Pubs
- Nightclubs
- Public Toilets



PERSONAL INFORMATION

When you meet someone for the first time or you don't know them well you should be careful about what you tell them about yourself.



Telling someone you don't know well too much about yourself can put you at risk.



Some examples of things you shouldn't tell someone you don't know well are:

- **Your address**
- **Your phone number**
- **Your credit card or bank card PIN number**
- **Your passwords**
- **Your Mother's maiden name**
- **Where you work**



Somebody could use your personal information to:

STEAL FROM YOU - this means taking your things or your money from you.



STALK YOU - this means following you, watching you or turning up at places they know you'll be, such as your home.



STEAL YOUR IDENTITY - this means using your information to pretend that they are you.



ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS

Computers and mobile phones have changed the way some relationships work.

You can now get to know people from all around the world who you may never meet in real life.

This kind of online relationship could be:

SOCIAL MEDIA - these are websites and apps that allow people to share information, photos or videos with others. Some examples of social media are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat and Tumblr.

DATING APPS - these are websites and apps that allow people to find other people who are looking for a romantic relationship. Some examples of dating apps are Tinder, Grindr, Plenty of Fish, Match and eHarmony.

MESSENGER APPS/CHAT ROOMS - these are websites and apps that allow you to have conversations with other people. Some examples of messenger apps/chat rooms are WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, WeChat, Viber and website chat rooms.

VIDEO MESSAGING - these are websites and apps that allow you to make video calls to other people. Some examples of video messaging apps are Zoom, WhatsApp, Skype and FaceTime.



ONLINE RELATIONSHIP RISKS

Having an online relationship can have its own risks:

SHARING PERSONAL INFORMATION - you may not know people online as well as you think you do. You should always be careful not to share too much personal information online.

CYBERBULLYING - this is when someone online bullies you. This could be by making fun of you, threatening you, not leaving you alone or sending you messages that upset you.

GROOMING / CATFISHING - this is when someone builds an online relationship with you so they can take advantage of you or abuse you. They may pretend to be someone else to do this.

An online predator might pay you lots of attention and make you feel special to build trust before taking advantage of you, such as asking you to send naked pictures or asking you to send them money.

SCAMS / PHISHING - this is when someone sends you emails or texts that may contain fake links that lead to websites that ask you to enter personal information such as your bank details.



There are lots of things you can do to stay safe online:

- Never share anything online that you wouldn't want your family, friends or support workers to see.

Once something has been posted online you lose control over it, especially if someone else screenshots or shares it.

- Don't send anyone naked or sexual pictures or post any naked or sexual pictures online.

- Don't share any personal information such as your address or phone number.

- Never send anyone your PIN numbers, passwords or bank details.



- If someone is bullying you online, block and report them.



- Never click on a website link or install software or an app if you don't know what it is.



- Set your social media to private so that only friends can see what you post.



If you are worried about something that has happened online speak to a friend, support worker or someone you trust for help.



Contact the police if a crime has been committed.



To report a crime you can call the police on **101**. If it is an emergency or you are in danger you can call the police on **999**.



WHAT CAN CAUSE A RELATIONSHIP TO BREAK DOWN?

A lot of relationships change over time and sometimes relationships will break down.

This means that a relationship can get worse over time.

There are many things that may cause a relationship to break down. Some examples are:

- Being told what to do
- Arguing or fighting
- Lack of trust
- Not talking to each other
- Bullying
- Lying
- Stealing
- Jealousy



CAN YOU THINK OF ANY OTHER REASONS A RELATIONSHIP MIGHT BREAK DOWN? IF YOU CAN, WRITE THEM BELOW!



SIGNS THAT A RELATIONSHIP HAS GONE WRONG

If any of the following things are happening in a relationship it is a sign that things have gone wrong:



EMOTIONAL ABUSE - this could mean someone telling you what to do, controlling who you spend time with, stopping you going where you want to go or telling lies about you.



THREATS/INTIMIDATION - this could be someone saying they are going to hurt you, saying they are going to hurt themselves or others, destroying things that belong to you or making you uncomfortable by standing over you.



PHYSICAL ABUSE - this could be someone slapping you, hitting you, punching you, shoving you, biting you, kicking you, burning you, choking you, holding you down or throwing things at you.



SEXUAL ABUSE - this could be someone touching you in a way you don't want to be touched, hurting you during sex, making you have sex when you don't want to or making you have unprotected sex when you don't want to.



FINANCIAL ABUSE - this could be if someone steals money from you, borrows money from you regularly but never repays it or spends money meant for you on themselves.



**ANYONE CAN BE THE VICTIM WHEN A
RELATIONSHIP GOES WRONG, MEN AND WOMEN!**



WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

If something goes wrong in a relationship there are lots of organisations you can contact for help or advice, such as:

THE POLICE - To report a crime you can call the police on **101**. If it is an emergency or you are in danger you can call the police on **999**.

RAPE CRISIS CENTRES offer services for women who have experienced any form of sexual abuse.
www.rapecrisis.org.uk / 0808 802 9999

RASA MERSEYSIDE CENTRES provide services for men and women who have experienced any form of sexual abuse. **www.rasamerseyside.org / 0151 666 1392**.

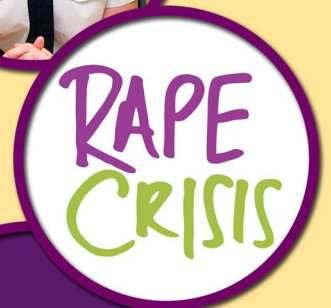
SEXUAL HEALTH CLINICS offer help for people who have experienced any form of sexual abuse.

To find your nearest Sexual Health Clinic you can visit **www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Sexual-health-information-and-support/** or call **111**.

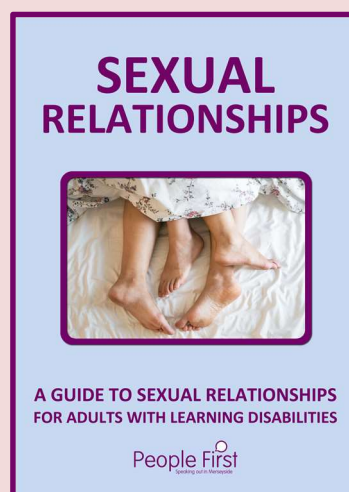
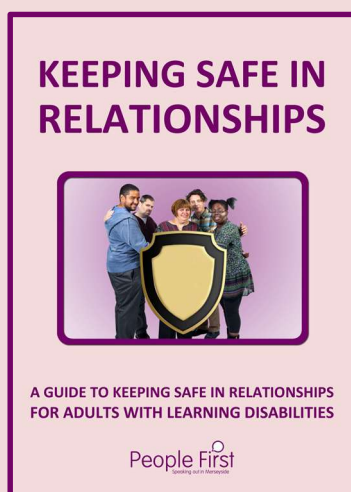
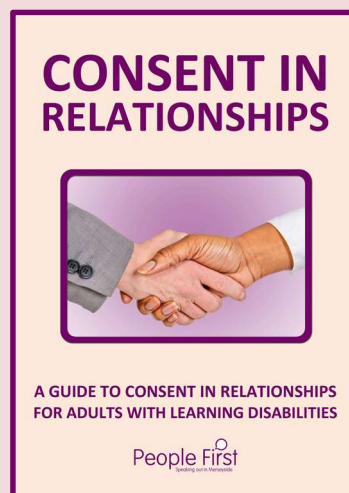
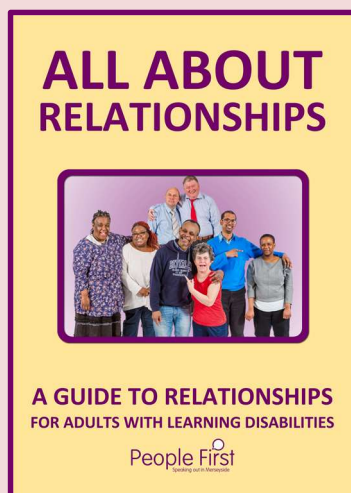
SURVIVORS UK provide a national helpline for men who have experienced any form of sexual abuse.
www.survivorsuk.org / 02035 983 898.

VICTIM SUPPORT provide emotional and practical support to people who have been the victim of a crime. **www.victimsupport.org.uk / 0808 168 9111**.

IF YOU NEED HELP TO CONTACT ONE OF THESE ORGANISATIONS, SPEAK TO A FRIEND, SUPPORT WORKER OR SOMEONE YOU TRUST FOR HELP!



THIS BOOKLET IS PART OF A SERIES ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES:



TO DOWNLOAD OUR OTHER BOOKLETS PLEASE VISIT
WWW.PEOPLEFIRSTMERSEYSIDE.CO.UK

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