

# Breaking Up Tips

- 1. Talk to a trusted and wise person:** Discuss the reasons the relationship is not working. Make sure this person won't tell everyone, but will keep your conversation private. Make sure this person won't encourage drama or chasing after him or her in a desperate way. Tell friends and family when you're ending it.
- 2. Pick a time and place:** Pick a private place. You don't want to do it around his or her friends. The person may become emotional—perhaps cry, be angry, or want to talk. Give him or her the respect that privacy provides. Don't tell the person right before a big event, such as their birthday, a game or performance, or the start of the school or workday. And, be sure to tell the person yourself.

**CAUTION:** If you think the person may become violent, break up in a safe place. Have a caring adult present with you. Seek support and advice from the local domestic violence group to develop a safety plan if you are afraid of your ex.

- 3. Make a clean break:** Don't put it off. Spell it out clearly. Be honest and direct, but not cruel. Say, "I want to break up. This relationship is over." Or, "I do not have the same feelings anymore." Do not string someone along.
- 4. Have a method to avoid cruelty:** Include in your conversation what you like and appreciate about the other person. But don't give false hope or mixed messages about your decision.
- 5. Caution:** If a person threatens to harm, or even to kill, him or herself if you break up, you must reach out for help. Their threat may make you feel guilty, scared, or angry but you can and should still end things. Even though this is emotional blackmail to make you feel responsible and not break up, this threat has to be taken seriously. This is why you must reach out to your parents, his or her parents, a school counselor, or another caring adult for help in handling this. The national suicide crisis hotline is 988 (call or text). If there is immediate danger, call 911.



# Surviving a Breakup

- 1. Don't blame yourself.** There are many reasons why relationships end. Make a list of your positive qualities. Ultimately, you want a partner who admires you, recognizes your qualities, is as crazy about you as you are about him or her, and accepts the real you. Make a list of what you want in a partner. What can you learn from this relationship? Are there things you need to work on to build yourself up?
- 2. Face reality—it's over.** Don't be obsessed with winning this person back. You can't force a relationship. It sacrifices your dignity to beg for a relationship, to act desperate, or to try to chase after the person.
- 3. Stay away from the revenge game.** Forget about getting even or spreading rumors. It's immature and makes you a little person.
- 4. Get perspective.** Many people go through a number of romances before finding and committing to the right person. With each relationship you can grow wiser and more insightful about yourself, what you are looking for, and how a relationship should be.
- 5. Don't jump quickly into another relationship.** Some people hop into another relationship right away to make their ex-partner jealous or to make themselves feel better. This only leads to more problems and is not good if you have a child. Give yourself time. Identify what you want to work on and do for yourself.
- 6. Get out and do things.** After you've given yourself some time to cry, get busy. Don't wallow in self-pity. Shoot baskets or kick a ball, or go walking, biking, or fishing. Take up a hobby. Get outside. Sunshine and the outdoors can be healing. Getting active will make you feel better and put you in a position to meet new people. Call friends, make plans.
- 7. Remember, things get better with time.** If you are still crying and depressed weeks later, talk to a trusted adult who can help you.



# Tips for Parents

## The Basics:

- Don't drag it out. End it for good. Don't do the on again, off again thing.
- Don't keep calling your ex just to make sure he/she is okay.
- Take precautions if you need to. Change locks? Get help leaving safely?
- Tell friends and family. Ask them for support.
- Find something nice (and positive) to do for yourself if you are feeling down.

## Realize the breakup can be hard on your child.

- Most children want a relationship with both parents.
  - Allow your child to talk about feelings of sadness and loss—even if you hate your ex.
  - Your child will need to process it many times as they enter different stages of life. •
- Make it possible for your ex to stay in touch with your child. Don't interfere with his/her relationship with their child.
- Regular contact is important for your child as long as his/her presence isn't dangerous. •
- Do not badmouth** your ex in front of your child—even if you think he/she deserves it. It just hurts your child and makes them feel bad.
- Don't think just any new partner can substitute for the other parent.

## Don't hop quickly into a new relationship.

- Focus on being the best parent you can be.
  - Complete school; seek employment.
  - Learn communication skills to help all your relationships, especially with your ex in co-parenting.
  - Take a break from relationships—give yourself time. Work on building yourself up. •
- Next time, don't slide. Take your time and use the relationship smarts you gain in this program.
- Know it takes time (often a long time) for a relationship to develop between a child and a stepparent.
  - Extended family and mentors can help children if you are parenting solo.