

## Session 7 In Person Leaders' Guide

# Healthy Relationships and Next Steps

### Key points:

- Help guests to see how far they have travelled, have a vision of their recovery and some concrete steps towards it.
- There is a lot to fit in (so maybe start content 5 mins earlier). It is important that you allow enough time **during the evening** for guests to complete feedback questionnaires. Please don't encourage guests to 'do it later' - this leads to a very poor response rate.
- Explain next week's celebration evening. Agree how your group will 'celebrate'. Make sure guests know that the log in will take them to a zoom call with guests who have been doing the course in other groups.

### Resources for this session:

Joining with central experts:

- Video link <https://youtu.be/JsNjFMTD8lw>
- Personal statement copies of or link to pdf [Link to pdf](#)
- Supermarket handout - copies of pdf [Shelf Updated 200622V2.pdf](#)  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15FNHgzi7u63dGJspNjg65m-1ouc-0cN/view?usp=sharing>
- Copies of feedback questionnaire or link to questionnaire  
<https://us19.list-manage.com/survey?u=35750137bc0c9f6ae7ba7cba8&id=6702849072&attribution=false>
- Pens/pencils for guests

7.00	Welcome and look ahead to the celebration evening
7.25	Check In – What did you find helpful from last week? (10 mins)
7.35	Exercise – What does recovery look like to you? (5 mins)
7.40	<b>Video 1 - Building Healthy Relationships (18 mins)</b> <a href="https://youtu.be/JsNjFMTD8lw">https://youtu.be/JsNjFMTD8lw</a>
7.58	Discussion – What are your thoughts on building healthy relationships? (15 mins)
8.13	<b>Video 2 - The Restored Lives supermarket (2 mins)</b>
8.15	Discussion - What are the important ingredients for you? (10 mins)
8.25	Coffee break (10 mins)
8.35	<b>Video 3 - Actions to make the ingredients come alive (2 mins)</b>
8.37	Discussion - What actions can you instigate? (8 mins)
8.45	<b>Video 4 - Next Steps (3 mins)</b>
8.48	Exercise - Write personal statement (10 mins)
8.58	Exercise - Fill out feedback questionnaire (10 mins)
9.08	<b>Video 5 - Conclusion, personal story and final teaser (15 mins)</b>
9.25	Finish

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## 2. Facilitating the session minute by minute

7.00pm Welcome Guests (Serve Food/Refreshments):

7.25pm Guest Check In - What did you find helpful last week? (10 mins)

- Ask ‘How has your week been’ and ‘is there anything you picked up last week which you have been thinking about or put into practice?’
- Summarise what was covered last week to remind people on any meetings with experts
- Summarise “How your ex affects you” and “the key skills for building successful relationships”?
- What was important for you?

7.35pm Discussion ‘What does recovery look like for you?’ (10 mins)

- What does a good recovery look or feel like?
- What do you hope for/long for?

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- What is it like right at the top of the recovery curve?

Encourage guests to dig deep and explore both how recovery feels and also what it looks like practically. It is useful to have this image as they start tonight's theme of moving on. Write comments on a white board.

## 7.50 pm Video 1 - Building Healthy Relationships (18 mins)

- Choose either to play the video <https://youtu.be/JsNjFMTD8lw>
- or give a live talk based on the text in italics

This next section is about how you can be best prepared for new friendships and new relationships. We're not going to go through the ins and outs of dating because many of you are not at that stage. And for those who are there is lots of information out there on that topic. This section covers, I suppose, the chapter before dating on how to prepare yourself for new relationships following a serious breakup.

Before talking about this topic, I want to make clear we are not saying that another relationship is necessarily the right thing for you, or that being in a new relationship is evidence of a restored life. Not at all. Your happiness does not depend on finding a new partner. In fact, living happily as a single person is the first and most important goal. It's a positive and fulfilling lifetime choice.

It's also worth saying that if you want a romantic relationship, looking for a new prospective partner can be really hard. The movies and TV make it all look so easy. You can also do a lot of work on yourself and do all the things that we're going to talk about in this session. But it doesn't mean that you will meet a new partner.

You may be single for a long period of time, or you may never meet someone appropriate. This doesn't mean that there is anything wrong with you. It doesn't mean that you will have a boring or miserable life. And it doesn't mean that investing in this time and all this energy in preparing yourself is wasted and quite the opposite. The skills that we will talk about now are relevant to all types of friendships and relationships and therefore, a strong foundation for building a happy single life.

So, first of all, there is a myth embedded in our consciousness. And in the stories that we read that we will meet Prince Charming or Cinderella. Probably after a simple one night meeting, they will join you full life and make you whole and complete. Sadly, in real life, there is no perfect prince charming or Cinderella.

Even the best people come with a bucket load of their own issues and problems. In one way the joining together of two people is more like the collision of two complex galaxies like this picture. When things come together, there is bound to be friction.

Friction is normal in a relationship and can be overcome if we both work at it. However, if you're vulnerable or not ready for it, then these collisions can set you back and hurt deeply. If you jump into a relationship too quickly, and have frustrations with a new partner, and maybe have an argument, how do you know which habits, fears or worries are the result of their problems? Or which are yours?

Your fears and worries will be heightened after a serious relationship breakdown and that's

why we say take your time. Start enjoying life on your own and find out your own interests. Investing in yourself and your friends is the perfect time to invest, understand yourself better outside being part of a couple.

- What do you like doing on a Saturday?
- Which interests do you enjoy?
- What are your aspirations or dreams? In life? And how can you fulfil them?

During this personal investment phase, practise the core relationship skills. Try them out with your friends and family first.

- Are you good at setting boundaries?
- Do you say yes to everyone, do you talk to them or listen to them and rarely say what you think?
- When are you a rhino or what are your instinctive responses and why are you able to change some of your own behaviours that aren't great in this respect? And maybe how you're going to change them?
- What things really irritate you now, when something irritates you, do you say anything?
- How do you say this is the time?

Be honest with yourself and maybe keep a journal of how you get on or talk to someone about them. Maybe talk to a mentor or a counsellor or a personal coach about setting goals. Or talk to any one of these people about the significant historical issues that come up in your life again and again.

Maybe it's starting with reading up on relationship skills. There are some brilliant books out there on these topics.

This is a period, I suppose of self analysis, and it's vital. After all, if you can't analyse your own relationship skills, and abilities How can you analyse someone else's traits and their relationship skills.

But this self analysis period is not for you to become I suppose self obsessed and sad that you're not perfect. It's simply to build an awareness of your strengths and weaknesses.

There may be some absolute necessities for you in your friendships and new relationships, possibly due to the issue that you have faced up till now. Maybe it's the necessity of having someone who will listen to you. Maybe it's someone who values your opinions. Maybe it's someone you can trust or maybe it's about feeling safe and protected. It's natural to have some of these. So write them down and talk to your friends about them.

In this time of investing in yourself, we'd encourage you not to focus on dating, but focus on building friendships, and building yourself up. So it's okay to say to people I'm not dating yet as I'm investing in myself first.

Once you're okay with yourself, having a good group of friends and you feel comfortable with the skills to build healthy relationships, then it's far easier to make a positive choice on romantic relationships. No one is perfect and we can always improve on these skills. However, this is the best foundation from which to start building healthy romantic relationships.

From this position, you can better understand a prospective partner. How do they resolve problems? How do they listen? How do you respond or react to them?

Remember, the way that you deal with issues or communicate at the beginning of a relationship will be the way that you work out issues at the end unless you actively work together to change things.

Similarly we'd encourage you to observe your future partner's life and their relationships with their family and friendship groups. Their history will illustrate their patterns of behaviour. And these will continue unless someone actively works to change them.

It's highly likely that if you move into a more committed relationship, many of your own fears or worries will be magnified. Maybe you worry about being able to trust someone again or being able to fully resolve issues successfully. Or maybe it's about being in a safe, supportive and loving environment. But don't therefore just blindly jump into a relationship hoping that these key elements will be present sometime in the future.

There are ways to work out whether they will be there in the future. For instance, how do you know a person is trustworthy? When you ask yourself some key questions about them such as:

- Do they do what they say they'll do?
- Do they take responsibility for their own actions and mistakes?
- Do they have good long term friends?
- Are they regularly and over a long period of time in touch with these friends?
- Are they willing to change their behaviour to ensure that you feel more trusted?
- Can you talk to them about your worries?
- Do they find a way to alleviate your concerns? Or just say it's your problem?

These are all, and there are many more, important topics to think about beforehand and maybe prepare yourself for what things do you need to see in a person to alleviate your deepest fear. Then be prepared to talk about it with your prospective partner at the right time.

Being honest with a partner on these issues is vital. Talk them through with a friend to bounce ideas and issues around. Whatever the issues are for you and your prospective partner. If you can work out a resolution together, then this process is how you build confidence and long term resilience in a relationship.

Of course, if you communicate these issues and nothing changes or you feel worse or even more at fault, it's probably a red flag that they will not be able to help you on these vital relationship issues. Take your time through the dating phase so that you can review the way the two of you work together.

And for interest, research indicates that having two years together before marrying gives you the most chance of staying together with a minimum guidance of a year together. As this helps you to live past that sort of initial burst of infatuation in a relationship.

Let me quickly cover the issue of choosing the right person. To be honest, I can't help you there but what I can show is what good looks like.

A good person is kind, considerate a listener, a talker, thoughtful, encouraging, supportive, treating you as equal, open when things are wrong, happy to apologise, has a sense of humour, cheerful and takes responsibility for themselves.

You might think "this is impossible to find someone like that!" However, these are good qualities and so therefore don't assume that no one has them. Or that just because you're lonely that you have to live without. So use them as a sense check.

Overall, a relationship works well when both parties can come together and mutually encourage, support and and build the other person into who they were meant to be, their best self. That's mutual love that can last and these qualities that we've talked about. We'll help achieve that.

Let's recap on the last few sessions. We want to enable you to uncouple yourself and move on in a healthy way. Free from the impact of the past. We have talked about how not to be coloured by your ex moving forward like in this picture and then moving into a phase of investing in you and in your friends.

When you can build new friendships whilst having space and time to understand yourself better and know your strengths and weaknesses in the five core relationship skills of:

- knowing your own emotions and listening well
- expressing yourself.
- Problem solving and
- conflict resolution and
- acceptance and letting go.

From this strong foundation, you can start to build new healthy relationships and then you can focus on understanding potential partners' relationship skills, of knowing and communicating your own issues to them.

So in conclusion, all our friendships and relationships give us meaning and purpose. And we want to empower you to participate in these relationships as much as you want to.

Whatever your current circumstances, or future intentions, the skills and knowledge will hopefully help you to move on successfully. So let's go into our groups and discuss what your thoughts are on building all kinds of new healthy relationships.

7.58pm Discussion - What are your thoughts on building healthy relationships? (15 mins)

8.13 pm Video 2 - The Restored Lives supermarket (2 mins)

- Choose either to play the video or give a live talk based on the script below

Restored Lives is a little bit like a supermarket. Over the course we've stacked the shelves full of items and ideas and skills and tools that might be relevant for you. Many people on the course will go down the aisles and find a few things and put them into their basket and take them away with them.

For some of you there are some things on the shelves that aren't relevant for you now. Maybe it's not the right time. Maybe you're just not in the right situation where something could work. Maybe you just haven't got the headspace for it. And that's fine. No problems.

We actually find that when people come back on the course, either as a guest again or as a helper. They spot things that they had forgotten or hadn't actually heard the first time

around. There are new tools and skills that they take and put into their shopping baskets.

We'd love to show you a picture I suppose of the Restored Lives supermarket with all of the products, tools and skills on the shelves. And we want you to have a look at it as a summary of the course. Maybe have a look and refresh your mind with what we've talked about. But particularly we love it if you look through the shelves and put into your basket the ingredients that you want to take away.

What are the specific things that are going to be helpful for you in the next phase of your life?

Let's go into our groups. Have a look at the pictures and pick a few ingredients that you want to take away. What are the specific things that are going to be helpful for you in the next phase of your life?

### 8.15pm Discussion - What are the important ingredients for you? (10 mins)

- Give guests the supermarket handout and - [Shelf Updated 200622V2.pdf](#)
- Discuss in pairs or as a group, Encourage guests to jot down their ingredients. on a piece of paper or in the back of their workbooks:
- Have a look and refresh in your mind, what we have been through? What can you see on the shelf that you remember from previous weeks?
- What are the specific things you want to put in your basket, what are the things that are going to be helpful for you in the next phase of your life?

### 8.25pm Coffee break (10 mins)

### 8.35 pm Video 3 - Actions to make the ingredients come alive (2 mins)

- Choose either to play the video or give a live talk based on the script below

We hope you have been able to find a few ingredients that you want to take away really from the course. We'd love you to spend a little bit more time thinking about the particular ingredients that you've chosen and think about what actions that you can do to make them come alive in your life.

I don't know what the ingredient might be, maybe it's a new pattern of communication. Maybe think about what the action is that you would do in that instance. Maybe it's simply concentrating on having a better neutral tone of voice when you talk to your ex. How are you going to do that? Write it down. Get some friends to encourage you. Write it on your fridge, whatever, that's the action that can really help you.

These skills and tools come alive in your life. Maybe it's something else, maybe it's just having a positive attitude to the separation and the divorce. Maybe the action is being kind

to yourself or making sure that you write down the positive actions that you've done each day.

Look at your list of ingredients and come up with some actions that can really bring them alive in your life. Let's get back into our groups and have a look at those actions.

### 8.37pm Discussion (8 mins)

Discuss in pairs or as a group:

- Have a look at your list of ingredients. What actions will bring them alive in your life?
- Write them down

### 8.45pm Video 4 - Next steps (3 mins)

- Choose either to play the video or give a live talk based on the text in italics

Separation and divorce is a long journey and we're all at different stages of that journey. At the beginning of the course we looked at the journey of separation and divorce and it's probably a helpful thing to go back to and look at that journey.

You'll remember that you often start by going into the depths of despair with all the feelings of pain and hurt that might be associated with a separation. Then at the bottom, there may be some seeds of hope and six acceptance, which slowly turn yourself on the upward path then there are a number of ups and downs.

We're typically affected by the choices that we make along the way. Events and choices come together in that period to either lift us or bring us down. But the choices we make are crucial at that period. But importantly, we can end up at a higher level than where we were before with a fully restored life.

And as we come towards the end of this course I think it's helpful to look at the question 'How do I want to move forward?'

What is it that will help you move forward in the future? For me, forgiveness was a key step. And for many people that can be a difficult process to go through. So at the end of this course, I want to give people a little bit of an opportunity to look at those two things. How do you want to move forward as well as looking at forgiveness as we end this part of the course.

We've got a little exercise where we're going to give you a piece of paper that has three statements that you can complete as you wish.

The first one is "I want to move on by..." That's where you can fill in the steps you want to take to move forward. Whatever you want, whatever you think that is the next thing that you want to do to move on and put in something there. That's that process.

Then because forgiveness is a big part of this we've also included two statements there. Firstly, "I accept that..." which is really giving you a chance to say yes or no to accepting



what has happened. Sometimes people feel that just writing down what's happened can be helpful.

And then we also put a statement in there "I forgive..." Now that's completely optional. You don't have to if you don't want to but for some of you, you may want to fill that in with the names of those you are choosing to forgive. You can fill in the list of people if you want. You can fill in your own name there as well. And that just gives us a little bit of a conclusion of recognising what you want to do for the next step.

#### 8.48pm Group exercise - personal statement (10 mins)

Give guests the worksheet [PersonalStatement210622.pdf](https://drive.google.com/file/d/16Z-jaY8f60MV5g_AkgUofx_y4oy3CZY/_view?usp=sharing)  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/16Z-jaY8f60MV5g\\_AkgUofx\\_y4oy3CZY/\\_view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/16Z-jaY8f60MV5g_AkgUofx_y4oy3CZY/_view?usp=sharing)

- Sometimes it helps to do something physical to mark a turning point in your life.
- What we are going to do is complete these three sentences - or as much as you want.
- Once we have done so you can choose how to destroy the paper as a physical act or mini ceremony to mark this moment and as a symbol of letting go or maybe a prayer or hope for the future you are sending out.
- You might choose to take it outside and (safely) burn it, you might rip it into tiny pieces, scrunch it up into a tight ball or tie it to a rock and throw it into a lake.
- The intentions expressed are not meant to be kept (like on your fridge door). They are just a snapshot of a moment in time and a summary of your thoughts and feelings today.
- Give participants time to write their responses.

#### 8.58pm Group exercise - fill out evaluation questionnaire (10 mins)

**\*\*\*Please wait for all guests to fill in their forms during the session.\*\*\*** We have found that this is the best way to get the maximum number of replies. People who promise to 'do it later' so often forget.

<https://us19.list-manage.com/survey?u=35750137bc0c9f6ae7ba7cba8&id=6702849072&tribution=false>

If you choose to do this online contact [helen.bradley@restoredlives](mailto:helen.bradley@restoredlives) to be sent the results. If you choose to do this on paper please scan and send your feedback to us, also by emailing [helen.bradley@restoredlives](mailto:helen.bradley@restoredlives) because this allows us to record how many people have

completed the course as well as analysing the efficacy of the course as a whole - which feeds into our fundraising activities.

Please explain to guests that hearing about their experiences on the course is instrumental to developing and promoting future programmes. The course has morphed hugely from its original form into what it is today as a result of feedback from past participants. So we - and future course participants - greatly value 10 minutes of their time this evening.

9.08pm Video 5 - Conclusion, personal story and final teaser (15 mins)

- Choose either to play the video or give a live talk based on the text in italics

To conclude, I suppose there may be three different ways that you might be feeling firstly, you might still be in that sort of shock and disbelief stage. It's quite common for people to feel still feel stuck in that sort of shock. "I don't understand what's going on. I don't know what's going on in my life." And if that's you, then I would encourage you to maybe come back, if you want, on the course. We have many people who come back, who are just struggling and you're most welcome. We'd be delighted if you want to come back on the course. It's up to you, though we'd encourage you to stay in touch with the people in your group. Stay close to people that are around you.

Others of you may be feeling fragile but are able see the way forward. "I can see the next steps that I have to take." And if that's you, again, I would encourage you don't get isolated. It's so easy to get isolated when things go wrong or events change. So stay in touch with us.

Others of you may feel that "no I feel actually reasonably sorted. I feel that I'm ready for the next stage of my life." And if that's you then you're in a really strong position to be able to move on successfully. And also I would encourage you to look at others who have gone through or who are going through separation and divorce. Because we all need help on the way and your experience can be an immense help to others who are going through similar situations. If you'd like to come and help then of course, then please do come and help others in a similar situation to yourselves.

Ultimately, though, there are no easy solutions to the issues that arise from separation and divorce. There are always things that we need to learn. There are always things that we could do better at. Relationships are one of the most challenging things in life, as well as being the most enjoyable.

This course though, is designed to give you the tools to be able to move on successfully and also to be confident of being able to have good deep meaningful relationships in the future. Now there's many people that you would have seen that have been in the depths of despair, and maybe you still feel in that position now. But I would want to reassure you as all of them have, there is life after separation and divorce. It's not just light at the end of the tunnel, there is the potential for a restored fulfilled life in the future and that's a real opportunity.

Or stop at the end of Erik's talk and include your own Personal Story Live **but play the final teaser (which is filled with hope for the future)**

### **9.25pm Goodnight**

- Reiterate the arrangements for next week's celebration evening.
- If you have time ask guests what they thought of the personal story
- Thank guests for joining and take any questions
- Encourage guests to stay in touch during the week via WhatsApp
- Reassure guests that they can keep in touch with you by sending an email

### **9.30 Out of hours chat / Leader/helper debrief**