

News release

**Relate Cambridge's Christmas tension triggers
(and how to avoid them)**

Relate Cambridge is anticipating a peak in calls in the New Year after relationship tensions come to a head over the Christmas holidays. In January 2017, Relate Cambridge experienced a 27% peak in calls* with a 47% increase in visits to their national website**, a popular source of self-help and information for relationships.

This rise in people getting in touch is a pattern seen each year, but Relate Cambridge says that by the time many couples get in touch, their relationship is already at crisis point. For some couples it is already too late by then, and January is also notoriously the most popular month for divorces. However, Relate's research has found that one in ten (10%) of divorcees said that, with the right support they would have been able to save the relationship and stay together.*** In addition, 18% said that, with the right support they would have been able to make the ending of their relationship easier to deal with. This is why the charity is encouraging people to seek support for their relationships at the earliest possible stage and is releasing tips on how to avoid common Christmas tension triggers.

Relationship Counsellor Elaine Taylor at Relate Cambridge said: "As Christmas approaches, there can be added pressures placed on relationships as family tensions come to a head, and the added stress of organising the festivities can ironically result in more arguments. There are some simple things you can do to survive this busy period with your relationship intact, such as delegating tasks and carving out that all-important alone time. Many people leave it until after Christmas to contact Relate, and whilst it is never too late to seek support for your relationships, the earlier you do it, the better chance you will have of resolving any issues and moving forward."

To help you through the holidays and out the other side with your relationships in a good place, Relate has come up with some common triggers for Christmas tensions and how to avoid them resulting in a full-blown row.

Relatives assuming you will spend Christmas with them this year

Try to discuss your festive plans well in advance of the big day, considering everyone's feelings as much as you can and if you cannot spend Christmas Day with them, find another time during the Christmas period when you can get together. Remember though, that it might be impossible to please everyone – try not to worry or feel guilty about this.

Your partner tends to spend a lot of money on food and gifts

Relate's research has found that money worries are a top strain on relationships and Christmas can place extra pressure on finances. Talk to your partner beforehand about what you can jointly afford to spend on food and presents. If the arguments persist,

consider some counselling to help you better communicate about money and understand each other's attitudes to it.

A family member has too much to drink and makes hurtful comments

As tempting as it may be to react, take a few deep breaths and try to stay calm. Accusing them of having too much to drink could make it worse. Instead, you could say "I'm not sure Christmas Day is the best time to discuss this. Let's talk about it another time." If you feel there are deeper underlying issues you may wish to consider family counselling.

The constant socialising is getting too much

Don't feel bad about excusing yourself so you can get an hour or so of 'me' time. It will mean you are in a better mood when you are with your family, so it is in everyone's interest. Even better if as a couple you can ensure that you have some quality time as a twosome.

You have too many things to do and you're feeling irritable

Don't suffer in silence. Explain to others in the family how you are feeling. See if you can delegate a few tasks and share the burden.

Relate Cambridge's non-judgmental services support individuals, couples, families, children, young people and friends of all ages, backgrounds and sexual orientations. Please contact 01302 347866 to find out more or to book an appointment.

For all media enquiries contact Elaine Taylor on 01302 347712. For case studies and pictures contact Sarah Osmik on 020 7554 7892 or sarah.osmik@relate.org.uk.

For urgent out of hours enquiries call 07875 049415.

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www.relatecambridge.org.uk

Relate Cambridge – supporting relationships at every stage of your life

ENDS

* This figure was calculated based on the level of calls to Relate's Response telephone network in January 2017 compared with the monthly average in 2016. Staffed by expert Consultants, Response is Relate's national phone network set up to deliver a high quality and consistent service to all callers. We consider Response to be the 'front door' to everything we offer, helping people to access our services across the country.

**This number refers to the number of sessions on the Relate website in January 2017 compared to the average month in 2016.

***Based on a YouGov survey of over 5,000 UK adults conducted in 2016 on behalf of Relate and Relationships Scotland.

Notes to editors:

- Relationships are the beating heart of our lives – when they aren't healthy, we suffer. That's why Relate, the UK's leading relationship support charity, is here to help.
- Relate champions the importance of strong and healthy relationships for all as the basis of a thriving society.
- Nearly 3 million people in the UK are in distressed relationships – that's 1.4 million families at breaking point.
- Relate's work helps prevent loneliness, depression, abuse, homelessness, debt and many other life-shattering events that can happen when relationships go wrong.
- Relate's non-judgmental services helped more than 1.5 million people last year, of all backgrounds and sexual orientations.
- Relate will celebrate its 80th birthday in 2018.
- Visit relate.org.uk or call 0300 100 1234 to find out more.
- Relate is a registered charity number 207314.