

UNDERSTANDING WHERE YOUR IDEAS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS COME FROM

The family we grew up in leaves us with a series of ideas and expectations about family relationships. Our mother and father figures provide us with powerful models that shape how we behave in our own intimate relationships when we are grown up. By understanding the ideas and expectations we have adopted from our parents we can choose to:

1. Keep the expectations and behaviours of our parents that we value and continue using them in our adult relationships, and/or
2. Replace the expectations and behaviours we don't like with new ones that fit better with our own ideas about relationships and parenting.

In this exercise you are asked to think about the expectations and behaviours you grew up with in your family and to write down how your parent(s) behaved together.

Gender roles:

Who did what jobs around the house:

Who had responsibility for earning money:

Who had responsibility for looking after the children:

Resolving conflict:

How were conflicts handled? Were disagreements discussed?

1. What behaviours or attitudes that you learnt from your parents do you not want to bring with you into your relationship and parenting style?
2. What behaviours or attitudes that you learnt from your parents do you want to keep?
3. Explore your expectations of yourself and your partner, especially as parents. What would you like to change? What are you doing well?