

Managing Relationships

Managing relationships while living with a chronic illness requires open communication, setting boundaries, and prioritising self-care for both the person with the illness and their family and friends. It's essential to be honest about your needs and limitations, while also acknowledging and appreciating the support of your family and friends.

Tips for the person with chronic illness:

- **Communicate openly and honestly:**

Share your needs, feelings, and limitations with your family and friends. Use "I" statements to express your needs without blaming or criticizing.

- **Set boundaries:**

Communicate what activities or situations trigger your symptoms and work together to find alternatives.

- **Advocate for yourself:**

Don't hesitate to ask for support or accommodations that would make daily life more manageable.

- **Prioritize self-care:**

Engage in activities that help you manage your condition and maintain your well-being, both physically and emotionally.

- **Maintain a social life:**

Don't let your illness isolate you. Continue to connect with friends and family for support and enjoyment.

- **Focus on the positive:**

Try to focus on the good days and don't let the negative aspects dominate your relationship.

- **Don't let the illness define you:**

Share other aspects of yourself with your family and friends, not just your illness.

- **Be patient:**

Understand that it takes time for both of you to adjust to the changes brought on by chronic illness.

Tips for family and friends:

- **Be patient and understanding:**

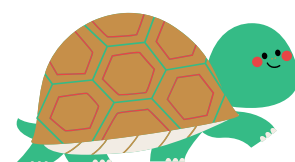
Recognize that adjusting to a chronic illness can be challenging and take time.

- **Get informed:**

Learn about their condition to better understand their needs and limitations.

- **Listen and share time:**

Make an effort to listen to them and spend quality time together, even if it's just talking.



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- **Communicate openly:**

Share your own feelings and concerns with them, and be open to discussing potential solutions to problems.

- **Take care of yourself:**

Everyone needs to prioritise their own well-being.

- **Seek support:**

Don't hesitate to seek support from a therapist if you are feeling overwhelmed.

General tips:

- **Find creative ways to connect:**

Explore activities that you can enjoy together despite limitations.

- **If this is your partner, remember, intimacy is more than physical:**

Intimacy can also be found in spending time together, talking, or simply being present for each other.

- **Consider professional guidance:**

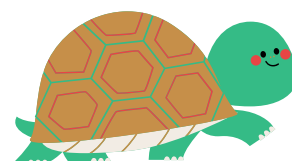
A therapist specialising in chronic illness or relationships can provide valuable support and guidance.

- **Don't let the illness dominate your lives:**

Make an effort to maintain a balance and focus on other aspects of your relationship and life.

Emergence ACT offers a publication specific to this topic called “**Information for family and friends of people with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Fibromyalgia, Long COVID, and other conditions with debilitating fatigue**”. A copy is available on our website.

This factsheet was created from Google's AI overview, which used a range of open-use sources including Northern Pain Centre, Lotus Medical Centre and Very Well Mind:
<https://www.northernpaincentre.com.au/wellness/chronic-pain-relationships/chronic-pain-and-relationships/>
<https://www.lotusmedicalcentre.com.au/building-a-strong-support-system-for-chronic-illness-management/#:~:text=Establishing%20Boundaries%20and%20Expectations,concerns%20of%20your%20loved%20ones>
<https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-cope-when-your-partner-has-a-chronic-health-issue-5193847#:~:text=Once%20you%20and%20your%20partner,close%20through%20this%20difficult%20time>
 This factsheet is part of our Club Tortoise program for pacing with energy-limiting conditions.



For more information or help managing your condition:

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