Surviving a Relationship Break-up
Counselling Service Tip Sheet

It’s inevitable you are going to feel bad after a relationship ends. Just about everyone, at some time in their lives, experiences this type of pain and loss and it is normal. Healing from a break-up means going through the dumps in most cases. You may feel worse if:

• You didn’t see the break up coming
• It wasn’t your decision to break up
• You still see your ex partner on campus
• It was your first serious romance
• They’ve moved on with another relationship
• They felt like your only real friends

But here are some tips to help you survive your relationship break-up...

Now it’s just me...

It’s important to keep the break-up in perspective. Think about what you still have - your health, your friends and your family.

It may sound corny but try and take one day at a time. And it is often true that a year from now you will feel very differently.
Remember number one!
If you were unhappy in the relationship, try
and recall why. If you were happy and they
left you, what have you lost if they did not
appreciate you? Let someone find you who
appreciates you!

What can I do now?
1. Call a good friend or family member
and speak to them for an hour or two
- your real friends and family will talk
to you.
2. If you are really feeling bad, invite
your friend or family member to
come over for the night.
3. It may help to talk to someone neutral
and objective, such as a counsellor.
4. Talk it out or write down your thoughts
- this can be a brave and steady
way through it.
5. Give yourself some realistic time to
get over it – why set time limits?
6. Take gentle care of yourself – eat,
rest and exercise.
7. Do some fun things as soon as you
feel able.
8. When you are ready, reflect on some of
the things you have learnt, given
and gained from the relationship.

What not to do
1. Try not to isolate yourself and
withdraw from those that care about
you.
2. Don't over use alcohol or harming
substances to escape the pain.
They will only make you even
more depressed and lead to further
problems.
3. Don't take revenge. It will only
prolong your hurt.
4. Don't try to be friends again with your
ex too quickly.
5. Don't bottle up your feelings. Let them
out slowly with trusted supports.
6. Don't wind yourself up with unanswerable
questions of “why?” or dwell on your faults.
7. Don't feel lost in grief – a counsellor
may help if you can't stop.

Remember those other interests?
You may have spent months or years with
your significant other and devoted your
energy into making that person happy. In
some cases this may mean you neglected
the hobbies you had or the friends you
socialised with as a single person. Being
on your own means having an opportunity
to get back into the hobbies that made
you smile before and re-establish good
connections with friends.

Remind yourself...
1. You are a good person and when the
time is right you will meet someone
again.
2. You are better off alone than in a bad
relationship.
3. The hurt will go away day by day.
4. Remember the last bad relationship
you had prior to this one ending.
Remember how miserable you felt
when you were breaking up then?
You probably got over that and with
time you will get over this one.
5. The main thing is to take one day at
a time.

Rebound relationships
After breaking-up it may be best to look
inward and see if there is anything you
need to take care of before jumping into
a new relationship. You will probably be
vulnerable after a break-up and you may
be tempted to go for a rebound-relationship
so you will not be on your own. It is best to
take things slow however, especially during
the first month after a significant break-up.
Take care of all the things you didn't do when
you were in the relationship. Concentrate
on your health, your uni studies, your
finances and better relationships will follow.

And when you do enter a new relationship,
never forget to nurture your individuality
- neglecting to do so may contribute to
co-dependence on your next partner and
can eventually lead to resentment in both
individuals. If you are a whole and happy
person in your own right, you will not need
a relationship to “complete” you; rather it
will be the icing on your cake!

References
This tip sheet was adapted from: Surviving
Relationship Breakup (ANU Counselling
Service) and http://www.survivingbreakup.
com.

More information is available from:
• Relationships Australia
  (http://www.relationships.com.au)
• Family Relationships Online
  (http://www.familyrelationships.gov.
au)
• ReachOut: Friends and
  Relationships Fact Sheet
  (http://www.reachout.com.au)

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Please note that this tip-sheet provides information and guidance only - it is not a substitute for professional counselling and support