

Resource

Emotions, relationships and coping with RA

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For every person given a diagnosis of RA, there is a wider circle of people who will also be affected by that diagnosis. This can include the patient's partner, children, parents, colleagues and friends. The diagnosis can affect the nature of that relationship. A partner may sometimes have to take on the role of carer and romance and intimacy may be impacted. A colleague may do their job more slowly and may rely on others to help them to complete a task, a child may have to help out more at home and playtime may sometimes be limited, and a friend may cancel plans at short notice, due to a flare or fatigue.

The person with RA may go through emotional as well as physical changes due to their condition. Their energy levels may be lower, their ability to think and remember might be compromised by their medication and symptoms, and they may experience depression, as they go through a sort of grieving process in trying to come to terms with their diagnosis.

Understanding and acknowledging all these changes and working through them can help to strengthen relationships. Talking openly about thoughts and concerns can help, and it can also help if both the person with RA and those connected to them educate themselves about the condition, through good information resources, such as those provided by NRAS and services such as the NRAS Helpline, which is available to anyone affected by RA.

Emotions, relationships & sexuality

This booklet tackles emotions, relationships and sexuality, and how these very personal and intimate issues are affected by being diagnosed with and living with rheumatoid arthritis.

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[Sex, drugs and RA](#)

[Being diagnosed with a long-term condition requires adjustment and acceptance in all areas of life, including the impact that it has on relationships, intimacy and sex.? Whether you are male or female, in a short or long-term partnership or married, intimacy is a way of making us all feel both special and individual and is also an important way of promoting our self-esteem.](#)

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[Depression and rheumatoid arthritis](#)

[Depression can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, race, culture, level of wealth or profession. What is encouraging is that the people mentioned above have managed or continue to manage their condition and have full and active lives.](#)

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Pregnancy and parenthood can bring a lot of stresses and challenges, especially for a parent with RA. These challenges, however, can be overcome with the right support and information, to make parenthood the rewarding experience that all parents strive for.

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