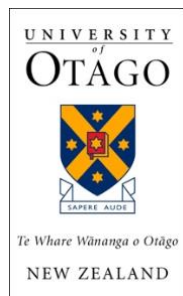


YOUTH HEALTHY AND SAFE RELATIONSHIPS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ISBN: 978-0-473-54249-8

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We thank the Ministry of Social Development of New Zealand for funding this project. The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not represent the views of the Ministry of Social Development.

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INTRODUCTION

Young people are growing up in an increasingly complex and precarious world. The last few months alone have seen large-scale social and economic shifts as the world grapples with a global pandemic. Although Aotearoa New Zealand has seen relatively less impact than other countries, young people have had to adjust to school closures and decreased certainty about the future. COVID is but the most recent major crisis impacting young people. Over the last few years, climate change has become a central concern to young people, with a recognition that we live on a fragile planet and that societies focused on growth and consumption are not sustainable. While homeownership and permanent employment were taken for granted as possibilities for previous generations, they are swiftly becoming unattainable dreams for young people today who are expected to adapt to an ever-changing and complex world.

Amid these crises, young people have also proven to be fierce resisters and change-makers. We have witnessed large scale global school walkouts and marches demanding efforts to slow or stall climate change. Capitalising on digital technologies young people have brought issues of inequality into the public imagination with the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements. Rainbow (LGBTIQ) young people, while still facing challenges, do have more visible role models, and more access to resources and support in Aotearoa New Zealand and many other countries.

It is within the landscape of these global crises that young people continue to discover and build their romantic and sexual lives. Adolescence and young adulthood has always been a time for change and discovery of these new relationships and creating adult identities that set them apart from their parents. Today's youth build these new identities in somewhat more public ways than before. The proliferation of social media means that a large part of their adolescent journey can be broadcast to the world, while they too can observe, learn from, influence and be influenced by others from around the world.

Considering the complex context of the lives of young people, this report reviews relevant literature to better understand what we know about how young people think about the romantic and intimate relationships and the factors that influence both healthy and harmful relationship behaviours. Young people report knowing the 'basics' about healthy and unhealthy relationships. They understand that physical violence is harmful and that they should aspire for egalitarian relationships. Yet, they do not recognise more subtle forms of unhealthy relationships, including coercive control, and they struggle with identifying problematic behaviours in their relationships, despite being able to identify problematic behaviours in others.

Throughout the literature review, we use the phrase “young people” to refer to people between the ages of 13 and 24; “adolescents” for those between the ages of 13 and 16; and “emerging adults” for those between 18 and 24. The ages of 16-18 are typically when young people transition from adolescence into emerging adulthood. Some young people in this group will identify (in terms of attitudes and behaviours) more closely with adolescents, while others with young adults.

The relationships within which young people engage can contrast sharply with past generations—two characteristics, in particular, shape these differences. Firstly, the use of online technologies and spaces that impact relationship and intimacy development and allow young people to develop intense emotional bonds rapidly. While in this literature review, we refer to online and offline or ‘in real life’ behaviours, it is essential to note that for young people these are not separate or distinct realms. These ‘spaces’ are fluid. Some things that happen in real life (at school, for instance), can continue into online spaces. For example, bullying behaviour at school can migrate into online spaces or vice versa. Online spaces are often where young people feel they can take more risks. They may find it easier to express their feelings online, whether it is feelings of admiration or a crush, or whether it’s anger and frustration (that can come out as bullying behaviour). The presence of online spaces means that young people often experience more potent and quicker development of emotional connections and bonds compared with relationship development exclusively ‘in real life’.

Secondly, casual sex is increasingly becoming a pathway to how emerging adults establish relationships. For older generations, the development and maintenance of romantic relationships was key to establishing oneself as an adult¹. Many milestones associated with marking the entry into adulthood, such as marriage and childbearing, are now occurring later in life. As such, for young people today, the role of sex is becoming more central to their lives of as markers of their emerging adulthood¹. Casual sex is increasingly the entry point into relationships. Young people may meet potential partners at parties or other social gatherings, then have casual sex. Sometimes they hook up multiple times, and this develops into a relationship. Other times it may be a one-off encounter or a ‘friends with benefits’ type relationship where the couple are not committed to each other exclusively and do not develop other aspects of a relationship but engage in sex regularly or semi-regularly.

The increase in casual sex as a pathway toward intimate and long-term relationships makes the separation between romantic and sexual relationships nonsensical. While we do not yet know how initial casual sex encounters shape relationship dynamics, it is clear that casual sex is setting the parameters for the relationship. If coercion is present in those early encounters, it has the potential to continue and impact all aspects of the relationship. Those first sexual experiences can set the tone of a future relationship and experiences of coercive, or controlling behaviour present in those early encounters are warning signs.

The challenge, then when working to decrease relationship violence among young people, is how to work with them to understand pre-cursor and more subtle behaviours better. Peers also play a very large role in perceptions of healthy relationships and can support unhealthy patterns of behaviours. This report outlines firstly how young people engage in romantic and sexual relationships. We then discuss the range of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours associated with relationship violence and abuse among young people, with attention to how online and mobile technologies can facilitate or exacerbate this form of violence. From there, we move on to discuss the key influences of relationship violence and abuse. Peers play a considerable role in how unhealthy behaviours are perceived and maintained. Other influences including media, social media, whanau/family and pornography.

Finally, our report will review some population-based social marketing projects with young people. Evaluations of such campaigns vary widely in terms of scope and detail. Still, we endeavour to provide some discussion of the key components of campaigns with young people and what seems to have worked in terms of engaging young people as well as changing attitudes and behaviours.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR ROMANTIC LIVES

FLIRTING

High school students typically become aware of a crush or romantic interest in real life (e.g. they have seen them around the school) or through friendship circles online (e.g. via social media through mutual friends' posts/pictures). However, they may use online/social media to begin 'flirting' or expressing interest in each other. Flirting in this context can include friending or following someone on social media, commenting with emojis on their photo, 'liking' their pictures, or sending them a funny video/picture to indicate their interest ^{2,3}. Sending nudes was also another way teens flirt ⁴. Some young people are clear about how to negotiate flirting through social media and direct messages (DMs). Longer, more detailed messages are considered indications of interest in pursuing the relationship.

Private online communication ("sliding into DMs") facilitates relationship progression and then progresses to real-life meetups (sample 15-19 y/o) ⁵. From the accounts of young people, it is clear that offline and online interactions are both important to the development of young people's relationships. Many young people report that the online environment provides an excuse to initiate a private conversation away from the pressure of doing so in offline settings. Young people see initiating private conversations online as less risky both in terms of physical safety and in terms of emotional vulnerability ^{2,3,6,7}. Online flirting allows young women a way to negotiate the

sexual double standard commenting that they are more suggestive and flirty online than offline. If their flirting is ‘too much’ then they can use humour or ‘just joking’ to deflect any judgement from young men⁷.

Similarly, young men also just humour and the ‘just joking’ phrase to protect themselves from emotional vulnerability if the person they are flirting with is not interested⁷. Young people’s relationships become emotionally intimate quickly due to the use of technology, as there is a lack of adults in social media space, unlike physical spaces which are likely to be mediated by adult presence. While we have clear evidence for how young people use social media platforms such as Facebook to flirt, we do not have a clear idea of how they use newer platforms such as TikTok and Instagram to flirt or to express romantic interest.

BECOMING EXCLUSIVE OR “OFFICIAL.”

During a period where young people may be talking with a romantic interest, it may not be clear whether they are “together” or not. Adolescents are vague in how they discuss relationship stages, compared to emerging adults. Young people describe initial stages of working out if there is romantic interest as ‘just talking’⁸. The move from ‘just talking’ to ‘a thing’ is marked by more flirting in younger adolescents however in older adolescents this stage may also include ‘friends with benefits’ or just ‘messing around’⁸. Hooking up tends to fit between having a thing and deciding to be in a relationship; however, this is also dependant on age. Older adolescents and emerging adults see hooking up as more to do with sex.

In comparison, younger adolescents see hooking up as going out together in the weekend and maybe some physical intimacy⁸. They describe the next stage of a relationship as ‘going with’, the beginning of an ‘exclusive’ relationship. Within the New Zealand context, no research examines how young people transition between relationship statuses or how they decide when to declare a relationship ‘exclusive’. Emerging adults using dating apps, or hooking up at parties, often end up in a serious relationship that started with casual sex or hooking up.

Once they have established that they want to pursue an on-going relationship with each other, they are considered ‘exclusive’. Exclusivity implies the couple would now avoid engaging with any other romantic interests and are ‘boyfriend and girlfriend’. Some couples may then become ‘official’ online (sometimes referred to Facebook official or Instagram official) to show commitment. Similar to the relationship milestone of meeting your partner’s parents, becoming internet official is the next stage in

romantic relationships where your relationship is announced and publicised to your friends and online following.^{6,9,10} It is not clear how young people transition from one relationship stage to the next.

Becoming 'official' on an online platform such as Facebook or Instagram was regarded by young people as a step beyond exclusivity, once the relationship was stable enough to announce to others; the online status was seen to legitimate their relationship offline as well, with one teen remarking "a lot of people will say it's not official unless it's on [social media]"¹¹. Publicising a relationship online may also be a strategy to make a previous partner jealous or to save face in the wake of a breakup. Others who are single but uninterested in romantic relationships may keep their relationship status on Facebook as "in a relationship" or "it's complicated" to not be bothered by questions or potential partners¹¹.

Young women, in particular, saw the feature of relationship status' on Facebook as useful to inform others in your social circle about their relationship status². On Instagram becoming 'official' means posting a photo of the two people together in an intimate pose implying they are together. Young women spoke about using relationship status' as a territorial move to make sure others know you and your partner are exclusive and to indicate to others that your boyfriend is unavailable⁶. Young women were unhappy if their partner did not meet their expectations of exclusivity and visibility of their relationship online⁶.

Young men's views did not align with those of the young women, as young men saw the publicizing of relationships online as inciting drama and discussed concerns with how their partners could monitor their past and present relationships with other young women through social media^{3,12}. Young men are more likely to report pressure from their partner about their relationship status and behaviour online¹¹. Some young men said that their girlfriends pushed them to make their relationship public and go Facebook Official (FBO) and that they feel pressure from their girlfriends to spend more time on Facebook reciprocating their online affection¹¹.

Young people have reported that one of the problems they encounter when they have their relationship visible online is that it opens up your private relationship to the public sphere, allowing others to comment and judge the relationship^{6,11}. Young women also discuss the increase in 'drama' when relationships are visible online. Jealousy from peers and 'drama' often contributes to tensions around having a relationship visible online, and this is discussed more in the section on peers and jealousy. It is not clear how the online curation of relationships impacts the dynamics of the relationships.

STARTING WITH CASUAL SEX

The trajectory above appears to be most relevant to younger adolescents who are starting relationships often for the first time. Emerging adults, including those in the last couple of years of high school, tend to begin relationships by hooking up. Relationships often start by going to a party or bar on the weekend, hooking up with someone. The sexual double standard still exists within this setting, where men are rewarded for having multiple partners and women are shamed. Both women and men support the sexual double standard. Some women critique the casual sex that other young women engage in while clearly stating that they are not ‘a slut’ or ‘one of those girls’^{13–15}.

We have scant research looking at why emerging adults seem to prefer starting relationships with casual sex. One young woman described in detail why she preferred to start relationships with a hookup; she explained that sex requires a lot less vulnerability and commitment than an emotionally committed relationship. Having an emotionally close bond with someone else felt more threatening, so she would have sex with someone first to see if they were “sexually compatible” then decide whether she wanted to put the investment into the relationship emotionally (unpublished data, Beres, 2015).

Young women report that “friends with benefits” (FWB) can feel safer than casual hookups, both emotionally and physically as they already know their sexual partner; however this was also complicated by discussions about how emotional connections factor into definitions around FWB¹⁶. In one study, participants mentioned that there was suspicion if a woman was in an FWB relationship for too long as this indicated emotional involvement¹⁶.

The acceptance and prevalence of casual sex as an entry point into a relationship has potential implications for how relationships, in general, are understood. If there are aspects of coercion or dominance within the sexual encounters, this could shape any developing relationships. There is limited research around coercion and control within casual relationships. The limited research available suggests that there is more emotional abuse in “friends with benefits relationships” than partnered relationships among young people¹⁷. There is also evidence that there is more sexual coercion and rape within hook-ups generally.^{18,19} More research is needed to understand how beginning a relationship with casual sex shapes the ongoing relationship.

DATING APPS

Dating apps also facilitate the shift to casual sex as an entry to a relationship. There is a range of dating apps available to young people; the main apps used by young people are Tinder, Grindr, Bumble and Hinge. NZ research found that 53% of participants (mean age 20 years old) had used a dating app in the last year and of that group, 93% reported using Tinder²⁰. Thirty per cent had met up with someone more than once through online dating²⁰. The most common type of relationship developed through the use of online dating was friendship followed by short-term fling, one-night stand, and serious relationship. The most common motivating factor for Tinder use included developing committed relationships, followed by looking for casual sex. Men were more likely than women to report joining online dating for casual sex²⁰. One study found women tended to see Tinder as still having the ability to foster a long term relationship and have a negative view of ‘free sex’ and casual hook-ups available via Tinder²¹. However, men saw Tinder as a ‘legitimate way’ to meet partners. They were more likely to see Tinder primarily for sex.²¹ Eighty per cent of the Tinder users in the sample had met up with someone they matched with on Tinder in real life, and of that group, 80% had met up with fewer than five matches. Several respondents reflected the common attitude that Tinder is for hookups; however, they also spoke about how they used the app to developing intimacy and connection²².

Young people also spoke about dating apps in a way that highlighted a *merging* rather than a *divide* between online and offline spheres; thus dating apps were not seen by users to be distinct from offline spaces. Indeed the app’s reliance on geographical location likens the experience to offline meetings in that one has to be physically close enough to show up in the app. In-person dates that developed from digital meetings were awkward in a similar way to first dates or blind dates and not seen as distinct from dates initiated through face to face interaction²². A recent study found that the most common benefits of online dating were ‘helps you meet people outside of your regular network’ (25%), ‘opportunity to evaluate someone before getting to know them’ (19%), and ‘makes the process of meeting people easier in general’ (18%)²³. Lower on the list were ‘better alternative than meeting people in person’ (5%) and ‘safety concerns’ (2%).

When asked about the adverse effects of online dating and dating apps young people mentioned that ‘people are scammers/misrepresent themselves’ (aka. catfishing) (37%), ‘lack of personal or emotional interaction’ (14%), ‘just not a good way to meet people’ (11%), ‘focus on sex/hook-ups, not meaningful relationships’ (10%), ‘people have too many options of people to date’ (10%), ‘safety concerns’ (8%), ‘emphasises physical traits’ (4%), ‘facilitates cheating’ (3%), ‘people are impolite/ghosting/sexual harassment’ (1%)²³. There is a distinct gendered nature to online harassment via digital dating apps with women being more likely to cite ‘discomfort’ or ‘intrusive posts’ or harassment²⁴. To resist the harassment, some women publish the harassing messages online on Instagram pages such as *instagranniepants*. The purpose is to shame the men involved and give a voice to women’s experiences of online harassment²⁵. While humour can be an effective form of resistance from women it has the potential to

minimise the negative impact of harassing behaviour²⁴. Within New Zealand, we do not yet have a lot of qualitative research to suggest how young people are using Tinder, Grindr and other apps.

ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, AND BEHAVIOURS

Understandings of young people and their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours associated with relationships and relationship violence are complex. To facilitate the collation of literature describing the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of young people we have created tables that describe different attitudes/behaviours, how they manifest among young people and their potential impact for young people. The sections below summarise the main ideas in the tables and link the concepts and ideas together.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND COMMON BELIEFS RELATED TO ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS (TABLE 1)

Young people are very clear about how they define a healthy relationship. Values around respect, connectedness, communication, trust and commitment are all present in conversations with young people around what they value in relationships.^{26–28} However, despite a verbal commitment to equality within relationships, and a clear articulation of the values of a healthy relationship, there were still tensions around beliefs about coercive or controlling behaviour. We can summarise their beliefs about relationships by discussing how they reflect ideas about masculinity, femininity and relationships.

MASCULINITY

Central to young people's understanding of relationships was how they viewed men within relationships. Young people thought that men were less emotional, more physical, and heavily interested in sex. Men were perceived to be protectors of women^{16,27–30}.

Acceptance of biological imperatives about relationships and masculinity were strong. Young people accepted constructions of men as protectors, relatively "unemotional", and as having control in relationships. These ideas were connected with understandings that men were "just like that" because it's in their nature. Young people also believed that young men were more prone to aggression because of their hormones, which also was perceived to impact their sex drive^{14,16,31–33}. The acceptance of these biological imperatives means that harmful behaviour was dismissed because men exercising violence or power and control were thought to be following their 'natural' biological drives.

There was pressure on young men, often from peers but also at times from family, for them to conform to particular versions of masculinity that emphasised losing one's virginity and being in control of relationships with women ^{30–32,34,35}.

FEMININITY

Women are in a double bind. To fit in with their peer groups, they need to be seen as “in control” of their emotions and behaviour. They should be able to have a laugh and get down with the boys; but not too much. Women strive to maintain a curated image of self and portray ideas consistent with “girl power” – that they can do anything.

Similarly, they walk a fine line with sexual double standard – they should be agentic in their sexuality and have control over their sexuality, but make sure that it does not become “slutty”. When coercion and control come into play in relationships, they easily maintain traditional feminine roles of the caretaker and fall for romantic ideals around partnership. Therefore, the surface level ideas around equality are there but lack the depth when faced with relationships that are not equal. The “good girlfriend” is one who is sexually available, but not too much and not seen as too ‘needy’ or emotional.

The risk for young women is that they may be seen as overly emotional and moody if they do not adequately control their emotions. Both men and women talk about women being “lippy” if they talk back to their male partner or challenge him too much. Some women talk about being “lippy” as a way of provoking violence.

RELATIONSHIPS

Consistent with decades of feminism and the move toward equality between genders, young people express a desire for equality in their relationships. Relationships that reflect egalitarian roles are less likely to become violent or abusive. Yet, many young people continue to reify traditional gender roles within their relationships.

Young people believe that in relationships, the couple should share everything; including things like access to each others' social media profiles, and passwords. The focus on sharing everything can create pressure for constantly being in touch with each other and giving each other access to all aspects of their lives. While this type of closeness can be positive, the strong emphasis on sharing everything can be exploited as part of a cycle of coercive control. For example, one partner may gain access to the other's social media messaging, monitor conversations between friends, tell a partner to remove people in their social media accounts or uninstall apps. It is not clear

how young people make assessments of such behaviours and where these behaviours are ok, and when they become coercive. These are discussed more detail below in the section on coercive control.

Sex and sexual activity are normalised within relationships, and a version of sexuality consistent with heteronormativity is valued. Heteronormativity is the valuing of specific heterosexual constructions of sex and relationships – constructions that are consistent with dominant gendered discourses. Heteronormativity goes beyond an understanding that heterosexuality is the “norm” to outline what types of behaviours and roles are normal within heterosexuality.

The discourses that often shape heteronormative constructions of relationships, including those of young people include:

MALE SEXUAL DRIVE DISCOURSE. The “male sexual drive” discourse is a term used to refer to the way that normative heterosexuality is constructed around male sexual desire. It represents underlying ideas that men’s desire and need for sexual activity is innate—that men have a biologically insatiable urge to have sex and are forever in search of sex³⁶. The first articulation of this discourse was in the 1980s, yet more current research with young people demonstrates its ongoing relevance. This discourse is visible in the way that young people refer to men’s biological desires and needs to explain why they ‘need’ sex is something they pursue and naturalises placing men’s needs ahead of women’s in relationships generally^{16,27–30,37,38}.

While this discourse originated in terms of discussion of sexual drive, these ideas permeate normative understandings of heterosexual relationships⁴. It is not just male sexual desires that become privileged, but men’s desires and goals can set the tone for the relationship. The privileging of male desires and goals is visible in how young people talk about young men’s moods in relationships compared with young women’s. The phrase “his moods” is used to talk about times when young men get angry and may take things out on their partner. Conversely, when women are in a bad mood, they are perceived to lack control of their emotions, to be creating drama and for their feelings to be dismissed.

MALE IN THE HEAD. The idea of the ‘male in the head’ connects with the male sexual drive discourse but goes further to describe how both young men and young women think about relationship through a ‘male gaze’³⁹. ‘The male in the head’ represents a single version of heterosexuality, adopted by both men and women, that views heterosexuality and sex through a lens of male desire consistent with the male sexual drive discourse.³⁹. “The male in the head” describes a single version of heterosexuality, adopted by both men and women, that views heterosexuality and sex through a lens of male desire consistent with the male sexual drive discourse. There

is no “female in the head”³⁹, young men are not responding to a sense of female surveillance or power the way that young women react to masculinity. This idea of ‘male in the head’ continues to permeate young people’s articulation and understanding of heterosexuality^{16,31–33,40}. Young women tend to manage their femininity alongside and subordinate to masculinity³³.

Have/hold. The have/hold discourse is partnered with the male sexual drive discourse. Within this discourse, the focus for women is on “keeping her man” and consequently positions men as the objects of this discourse³⁶. Within the have/hold discourse, women engage in sex to secure a lasting relationship with a man, although sex is still constructed through the male sexual drive discourse. Thus, there is little space for female-desired sexual activity or sexual activity that does not fit within this masculine structure. This is discussed further in the section on pornography.

Among young people today, this discourse continues to be visible. One example of this is the way that becoming “Facebook Official” (FBO) can play out. For young women, becoming FBO can be an important step and is staking a claim on a man, whereas young men view it as inciting drama and as women’s attempt to stake a claim on them.

CONSTRUCTIONS OF DESIRE

A notion of desire permeates the discourses above. Importantly, it is perceptions of male desire that drive and shape heterosexual relationships, where female desire is rendered invisible or ‘missing’⁴¹. With casual sex increasing and overt expressions of female desired sex far more common among younger generations, it is easy to think that women’s desires are now more front and centre in young people’s constructions of heterosex. Yet, the discourses of the male sexual drive and the ‘male in the head’ point out that the type of sex and relationships that women are expressing a desire for is still the type of relationship that positions male desire at the centre.

WORKING WITH DISCOURSES

When working with discourses, it is essential to note that not all men or women will exhibit behaviour that is consistent with these discourses. Of course, there will be exceptions, and on a surface level, most young people will recognise that there will be times when men do not want sex. Yet, these ideas and discourses remain as underlying beliefs that shape understandings of heterosex. This can make it tricky to change discourses because changing the surface level behaviour or belief does not

automatically un-do the discourse. We can see that clearly with shifts in women’s sexuality over the last couple of decades. Despite increases in acceptance of casual sex, and discussions of female desire and pleasure, sex is still primarily constructed to suit male desire.

TABLE 1: YOUNG PEOPLE AND COMMON BELIEFS RELATED TO ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Behaviour/attitude	Description	Impact
Masculinity		
Men less emotional/more interested in sex and physical ^{16,27-30} (biological essentialism)	Males are seen as having fewer emotions, being more physical; less connected to the outcome of relationship and more interested in sex	Reinforces biological essentialism; doesn’t leave options for expressing alternative masculinities; men’s unhealthy or controlling behaviour is minimised because that’s “just how men are”
Men as protectors and in control of their relationships ^{40,42,43}	Construction of men as protectors, as non-emotional and as in control; note that this can also be culturally specific in terms of how masculinity/violence is viewed in relationships	Often supports controlling and coercive behaviour.
Pressure to conform to the dominant type of masculinity ^{30,43,44}	The pressure to conform to a particular type of masculinity. Can be influential in terms of losing virginity, treatment of women and wanting to fit in with male peers. Also comes from family, for example, fathers saying young men need to lose their virginity ⁴⁴	Supports controlling and coercive behaviour. Can limit options that young men feel they have in relationships, BUT sometimes was resisted in various ways – not directly challenging peers – using humour/deflection or personally rejecting ideas ⁴⁴
Male pleasure more important/male in the head ^{16,31-33,40}	Young women have male pleasure as the most important feature of sexual relationships	Lack of agency and pleasure experienced by young women in sexual relationships. Can link to coercion, compulsory heterosexuality, and sex drive discourse
Hormones/sex drive ^{16,30,40,44,45}	Belief in men having more aggression/sex drive due to testosterone; that young people want relationships/sex because of hormones	Supports heterosexuality and sex drive discourse; can be used as coercion in relationships. Places men as active women as passive. Some men resisted this biological narrative. ⁴⁰
Femininity		
Drama	Attributed to female aggression, starting gossip, fuelling arguments	Minimises emotional reactions of young women. Any anger, issues in relationships or between peers seen as creating ‘drama’.
Traditional femininity associated with virginity	Women who are seen as caring, kind, softness, sweet, cute are often also seen as virgins and innocent	Reinforces ideal femininity and the double standard around sexuality; social pressure around ways of acting like a woman.

Not too 'laddish' but not too 'girly.'	Women walk a line between been seen as assertive and able to participate equally with men but not to the point of losing their femininity – however they can be seen as too girly and lose social status.	Women feel they have more options regarding expressing themselves (compared to previous generations) but are still influenced by the male gaze and social pressure on appropriate ways women should act.
Emotionally changeable	Women are seen as overly emotional and moody. Sometimes linked with menstruation	Minimises women's reactions to coercive or concerning behaviour
Good girlfriend	Women have to perform in particular ways to be seen as a good girlfriend. This includes being sexually available, but not too much; dress style, and domestic labour; linked to #relationshipgoals	Can link to sexual coercion, and supporting manipulative behaviour
Active agents in sex and relationships	Women can be more active in pursuing casual sex and relationships	While women have more agency to seek casual sex; they are still bound by the double standard and have to manage their reputation around being seen as a 'slut'.
Lippy/verbal abuse	Women sometimes discussed as provoking men to violence by using verbal abuse or being 'lippy'.	Women's experiences of violence are not taken seriously.
Polished Instagram ready	Young women need to curate their image and be seen as polished on Instagram;	Questions as to how the curating of social media profiles plays into relationships with young people
'Up for it.'	Young women need to negotiate a space where they are seen as ready for drinking or sex but also not drink too much or have too much sex	Pressure on young women to perform for men.
Sluts	Women will be labelled a slut if they are perceived to be having too much sex or pursuing too much casual sex.	Women have to negotiate their sexuality very carefully to avoid social stigma
Caretakers	Will look after emotions of the male partner even in the face of abuse	Put others' emotions before their own
Control and contained	Young women must, at all times, have control of their behaviour and their body; middle-class women have more mobility than working-class women.	Feelings are dismissed, and actions are not taken seriously
Risk managers	Women must gatekeep male sexuality; be aware of the risk to femininity and manage self and others	Young women are held responsible when things go wrong
'good for a laugh'; able to relax; cool and assertive	The idea that young women need to be able to maintain a 'post-feminist' femininity that balances being authentic through a male gaze. Traditional femininity is seen as not being authentic. Note this is class-related with middle-class women have more movability than working-class women.	Stress and pressure to maintain social status.

Relationships		
Sexual double standard ^{14,16,29-33,46,47}	Men and women treated differently regarding sexual activity	Men retain power in sexual relationships; young women are often caught between needing to show that they can have sexual agency but are also judged for having sex.
Traditional dating ideas and gender values ^{43,48-50}	Believe in traditional ideas of gender and relationships for example men paying for dates; in living situations, women being primarily responsible for domestic labour; men being in control of relationship; men keeping tabs on movements and behaviour of women.	Linked to higher rates of digital dating abuse in younger adults; also linked to higher levels of violence and coercion in relationships.
'Online monitoring behaviours from partners as irritating not abusive' ^{12,51}	Young people often diminished the seriousness of lower-level controlling behaviours from their partners and dismissed them as irritating but not abusive. Young people link monitoring behaviours as being expressions of love.	Often a catalyst for issues arising in the relationship and leading to the escalation of further unhealthy behaviour. Also normalises controlling and harmful behaviour and the gendered notions that are behind it (e.g. men cheat, girls are possessive). When men monitor women online, it's viewed as protective and sign of love. When women monitor men, it is because they cannot be trusted. Impact of online monitoring behaviour is higher for women who can start to see the behaviour as scary, obsessive and controlling. In contrast, men see the behaviour as annoying.
Couples should share everything ^{3,6,12,52,53}	YP expect that people in a relationship should be comfortable sharing and giving their partner access to all aspects of their lives (e.g. SM passwords, checking messages, instant replies); if this access is not granted the partner is presumed to be hiding something (Baker & Carreño, 2016, p. 134)	Creates pressure for constant communication, exacerbates jealousy which thus leads to an increase in monitoring and surveillance
More gender equitable values ^{31,43,54}	More equality in dating, ideas around gendered behaviour, and if co-habiting about labour	Less likely to be violent/coercive
'Feel more like a woman; feel like a man' Compulsory heterosexuality ^{45(p200)}	The belief that there is a natural expression of sexuality – fits with 'compulsory heterosexuality.'	Gendered roles sometimes related; effects queer relationships.
'Normal to do it' – media influence ⁵⁵	Young people's attitude that it's normal to engage in sex at a young age as they see in music videos, social media	Pressure to have sex

UNHEALTHY AND HARMFUL RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIOURS

Young people report a range of harmful, violent and abusive behaviour in their romantic relationships. We describe these behaviours below using the categories of Consent and Non-Consensual Sex, Coercive Control, Physical Abuse, Stalking, Sexting and Sending Nudes. These behaviours map onto Table 2: Unhealthy and harmful relationship behaviours. Our purpose here is to describe how the behaviours manifest among young people and how young people perceive these behaviours. We do not address issues of prevalence.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Young people do report a range of physical abuse behaviours. Alongside physical abuse is the destruction of property whereby someone will destroy a partner's goods or damage walls. This type of abuse can also involve the destruction of essential medication, including contraception or hormonal treatment used for gender transition^{28,33,56,57}. Young people are typically quick to point out the harmful nature of physical abuse. Physical abuse does not have the same level of nuance as other forms of abuse and coercive control. Young people are savvy and able to identify types of physical abuse as problematic. Therefore there is little to say about physical violence in the context of this literature review. Often by the time that relationships become physically abusive patterns of coercive control are already established.

COERCIVE CONTROL

Coercive control is characterised by a range of behaviours used within a relationship that serves to isolate, dominate and control a partner⁵⁸. Young people are very aware of behaviours that could be seen as controlling or coercive in relationships, yet find it challenging to articulate what that means in their relationships.⁵⁹ As mentioned earlier "friends with benefits" relationships tend to experience more emotionally abusive behaviour compared with established relationships¹⁷.

Controlling behaviours consistent with mechanisms of coercive control have been documented within the romantic relationships of young people. Some of these behaviours include: checking up on their partner regularly (either in person^{28,60,61} or via text/social media^{27,51,56,60,62,63}), controlling what someone wears^{40,56,61-63}, treating a partner differently when in front of peers^{28,31}, disrespecting their partner in public^{28,64,65}, isolating them from friends/whānau^{28,56,57,62,63}, controlling a partner's social media accounts^{6,51}, and playing mind games^{28,56,57,60}.

Controlling and coercive behaviour in online spaces has a mixed reaction from young people. In online spaces the following coercive behaviour is reported: asking partners to 'unfriend' ex-partners, and friends; using texting and apps, such as Whatsapp, to check up on partners, checking phones and messaging apps, deleting Facebook accounts^{6,51,66}. Interestingly, the reaction to this behaviour from young women ranged from acknowledging the behaviour as problematic to seeing the controlling behaviour as being a show of love. For example, young men may keep track of their partners with online apps using the belief 'she realises that she is important to me and I care about her' and young women stating 'I feel he cares for me'⁵¹. Other young people dismiss these behaviours as annoying or bothersome⁵², rather than harmful or abusive. However, when young women are given the opportunity to reflect on those behaviours, they can then begin to see how they are more than just annoying. For instance, when researchers ask them about these various behaviours, many young women start by saying they are harmless, but later in the interview articulate that they can be harmful and controlling. It is difficult for young people to identify clear boundaries between harmful and healthy behaviours. Some of the difficulty around defining the boundaries between harmful and healthy behaviours is the belief that young people have a discourse of romantic love about being together all the time, and the desire to feel wanted and desired.

Controlling access to friends was one of the strongest themes in the literature with young men often controlling young women's interactions and access to her friends. In response, young women often described themselves as being lucky to be in a relationship and fortunate to have a loving partner. Initially, young women were happy to prioritise their relationship with their boyfriend; however, in interviews, their ability to reflect on behaviour meant they started seeing the controlling behaviour around friends as problematic.^{27,31,40,51} Consistent with the earlier discussion of the 'male in the head' the male partner often sets the rules of the relationship. While women certainly do push back at times, the taken for granted gendered dynamics related to the male sexual drive discourse and 'male in the head' make it difficult to develop completely egalitarian relationships. Certainly, not all relationships exhibit abuse, but men who engage in coercive control draw on the normative discourses discussed above to justify their behaviour.

Young women sometimes use the term "his moods" to refer to men who exhibit violent and controlling behaviour²⁷. This term can be used to describe times when a man is controlling or using violence. The use of this term implies some sense that is a pattern of behaviour that is ongoing and simultaneously minimises the harmful aspects of the behaviour.

Drama is another term that may be implicated with coercive control as it is used to describe conflict within a relationship. It is a term that typically describes the exaggeration and publicization of personal events. Those who engage in drama spread gossip, claim that improbable events happened to them, exaggerate and inflate the

seriousness of events happening to them, or intentionally incite tension between others. Drama is a label often attributed to female aggression and sometimes serves to belittle and undermine women's concerns or experiences⁶⁷. Drama is perceived as highly gendered, with young men not engaging in online or offline behaviours associated with creating drama⁶⁸. However, the term 'beef' (e.g. "I have a beef with that guy") will be used if there is a conflict between young men.

While young people use the term 'drama' to describe a wide range of behaviours, they consider drama different than bullying and (at times) as a form of entertainment⁶⁸. However, the use of the term drama also serves to blur the line between conflict, jokes, hurtful behaviour, and entertainment. Young people appear to use the term to create their narratives around problematic behaviour, while still lacking the ability to completely understand complexities of 'drama' beyond the surface later. Drama is often used to minimise young women's emotional reaction to events, and their serious concerns around relationships.

CONSENT

Consent is often the defining feature of sexual violence – such that sex without consent is rape or sexual assault. Young people deploy a range of strategies to determine whether a partner is consenting, including verbal or nonverbal, and direct, indirect, or passive^{69–72}. There are small gender differences with women more likely to use different types of verbal signals, and men more likely to rely on nonverbal cues^{70,73} this result is consistent in heterosexual and queer samples⁶⁹. Consent communication also tends to be more explicit in established relationships^{74,75} despite a stated preference for more explicit communication during casual sex^{76,77}. More explicit communication is also associated with penetrative sex, including intercourse, compared with other sexual behaviours^{74,75}. Young people are adept at reading contextual and behavioural cues when ascertaining whether someone is consenting^{78–80}.

Importantly, understandings and communication of sexual consent are embedded within heteronormative constructions of sex, femininity, masculinity and heteronormativity. Heteronormative discourses shape the types of sex that young women often agree to, such that they may often consent to unwanted sex to conform to social norms^{81–83}. Young heterosexual women endorsed a 'just say no' version of consent while finding it difficult themselves to say no to sex they did not want⁸², and blamed other women who engaged in unwanted sex. Within this context, young women are expected to be both empowered and adhere to heteronormative constructions of sex and sexuality.

CONSENT EDUCATION. Over the last couple of years, there has been a substantial increase in awareness and education about sexual consent. The shift to consent-focused prevention is relatively new⁸⁴ and has coincided with policy and legal reforms that rely increasingly on affirmative models of consent. Sexual consent education seeks to inform young people about the definition of consent and how to communicate consent⁸⁵. The rise of consent education has included the development of social marketing materials, memes, and blog posts that attempt to challenge norms around sexual violence by emphasising the importance of consent and telling people how to consent to sex⁸⁶. These messages are consistent with affirmative consent. Affirmative consent requires consent to be communicated in a "positive" manner, and for anyone initiating sexual behaviour to be sure their partner is willing. In other words, affirmative consent models focus on "only yes means yes" understandings of consent, in contrast to "no means no" models, where the focus is on listening to refusals^{87,88}. This shift improves on the "no means no" version by not requiring a refusal to demonstrate a lack of consent and places the onus on the person initiating sex to ensure they have permission.

Unfortunately, affirmative models of sexual consent sometimes get conflated with messages that consent must be verbal⁸⁶. Young people have reported they believe that affirmative consent is unrealistic because of their incorrect assumption that affirmative consent required explicit verbal negotiation⁸⁹. A more nuanced conversation is needed that recognises the complexity of consent and that consent "does not require an itemized list of anatomical parts that may be palpated or probed"⁸⁹.

STALKING

The term "stalking" is used by young people to refer to a range of behaviours from innocuous searching for someone's publicly-available social media accounts to persistent and harmful online and in-person surveillance and unwanted contact. "Stalking" your romantic interest's social media content is a common and accepted practice and part of young people's dating habits. For instance, checking out someone's social media accounts and activity can be used to determine compatibility with potential partners². Young people report that stalking via social media offers them unique opportunities to investigate others without them knowing and to engage in behaviours which are acceptable in online contexts but unacceptable offline: "most people wouldn't go out and spy on their boyfriend or girlfriend, but on Facebook, they certainly do." However, other young people compare using Facebook and other social media platforms to find out about crushes as similar to asking friends about the person, therefore, minimising the idea of stalking.

While 'liking' crushes' posts on social media can in itself indicate interest in that person, the practice of deep liking where someone 'likes' pictures or posts that were posted a long time ago is an even stronger indication of attraction because the person of interest is now aware of the fact they're being stalked³. While this type of

“stalking” is often used in relationship formation, it is used other times as well. Some young people reported stalking recent exes for closure and to learn more about their current dating life and status^{3,5}. It is not clear if this helps them move on, or if it is an indication they are still somewhat invested in their previous partner.

While looking at someone’s public profile is not problematic, this type of behaviour can cross a line into unhealthy, obsessive, and coercive behaviour. Young people report that their relationships are healthy in the beginning but as monitoring and controlling behaviours increase the relationship becomes unhealthy; regardless, young people remain in the relationship and interpret this type of controlling behaviours as irritating but not problematic.^{6,12} Young people are less likely than adults to characterise problematic stalking behaviours as abusive and can be dismissive of emotional abuse and online controlling behaviours; “teens generally agree that physical and sexual violence is unequivocally serious, but they define some forms of emotional abuse and cyber control as irritating rather than serious”¹².

The normalisation of the use of the word “stalking” in online contexts has resulted in a fluidity of the boundary between harmless and harmful behaviour which possibly makes it difficult for young people to identify where actions cross into unhealthy². The way young people tell the difference between acceptable and unacceptable stalking is in the characteristics of stalking behaviour. The frequency and volume of messages are used to distinguish between harmless and more harmful forms of “stalking”.³ The discomfort of these behaviours is intensified when the person is a stranger to them (someone they do not know offline) when they attempt to find other avenues of contact (e.g. searching for their Instagram account after being blocked on Facebook), and when the behaviour extends into offline spaces (e.g. they find out where you live or track your phone/location).

An NZ study by Women’s Refuge reported that of their clients who respond to questions about stalking, 74.6% are stalked by their partner while they are together, and 64.7% are stalked after the relationship is dissolved⁹⁰. However, there is very little research on stalking among young people within the New Zealand context.

SEXTING (SENDING NUDES)

Sexting is a term that means a range of behaviour from sending explicit text messages to the sending of nude photos and images. Young people today tend to use sexting almost exclusively to mean sending nude photos or ‘nudes’, typically nude selfies. Young people send nudes to experiment sexually, flirt, explore bodies, get sexual gratification, and gain trust in a relationship^{3,4,91}. Sexting, in the context of a committed relationship, has been linked to positive outcomes such as relationship and sexual

satisfaction⁹² (mean age 20 y/o). Adolescents generally see sexting as acceptable behaviour and only problematic when occurring outside of the bounds of a romantic relationship or being maliciously spread or publicised¹².

Young people also reported that they believe teens send nudes for attention, popularity, and as a joke. In contrast, others highlighted peer pressure and coercion as motivating factors.⁴ Sending of nudes is gendered, with more young women reporting pressure to send nudes and to receive unsolicited and unwanted nudes compared with men^{4,93}. Māori youth, those with impairments and queer youth receive more requests for nude pictures and more unsolicited nudes compared to other groups⁴.

'Dick pics' are photos (most often selfies) of male genitalia that young men send to others. Young women often reported that receiving unsolicited dick pics made them uncomfortable, shocked them, and invaded their sense of control and privacy by forcing explicit sexual material into non-sexual contexts⁹⁴. Young women reported considerable confusion as to why young men send dick pics when young women find them so repulsive, and rationalised that young men are "misguided" and misunderstand what turns women on. Young women also were able to connect somewhat the phenomena of dick pics to broader gender issues such as consent and the sexist idea that women welcome any and all sexual attention from men⁹⁴.

Young men report sending dick pics to show off, as a compliment to the recipient, and in the hopes of receiving pics from young women in return or it leading to sexual activity.⁹⁴ They saw sending dick pics similarly to other stereotypical sexual harassment (though sexual harassment was not how they identified these actions) such as ass slapping or catcalling and thought girls' were uncomfortable with receiving dick pics because they were too modest to show they liked the pics. Such an admission would label them sluts.⁶⁷ Adolescent young men did not seriously think about the negative impact of receiving unsolicited sexual images on young women^{67,94}. There was some increased awareness from young men as they reached adulthood of the pressure and impact on young women, particularly in relation to the non-consensual sharing of nude pictures^{67,94}. Young men recognised that social reactions to the publicization of their nude pictures would not receive the type attention as the publicization of young women's nudes, but generally failed to connect that to a critique of gendered norms. Instead, there was an understanding amongst both young men and young women that male nudity could be joked about whereas female nudity cannot; humour was available to young men to mitigate the damage and shame of the digital exposure of their genitalia while unavailable to young women⁹⁴.

Framing dick pics as humorous also ignores the transgression of boundaries that results from sending unsolicited dick pics and forces the receiver to either interrupt the joke and the 'harmless' intention behind it or to ignore their discomforted reaction⁹⁴. Humour can thus be a tool that benefits young men and undermines girls' responses.

Sexting by young men is closely related to ideas of hegemonic masculinity, with young men who engage in sexting seen as ‘heroes’ or ‘lads’ and often required to have a social status that allows them to send nudes⁹⁵. However, it is important that young men are not seen as ‘needy’ or ‘creepy’ in the way that they approach sending nudes, and sexting. If a young man doesn’t have the required social status or type of body, he can easily be shamed by peers or have his body become the source of ‘joking’ and teasing. Some young men refuse to engage in sexting and are openly critical of non-consensual sexting. However, men who are critical of sexting may still look at images on others’ phones because of the perceived risk to their reputation within the group.⁹⁵ Many of these men presumed that they were entitled (as men) to have access to women’s bodies. How sexting plays out within the New Zealand context is still an area that is under researched.

EXCESSIVE JEALOUSY

Jealous is often seen by young people as the primary motivator behind coercive and stalking behaviour. The way jealousy manifests in relationships is gendered. Young men reported being jealous of young women spending time with other men, and this jealousy manifested in controlling behaviour such as monitoring partners texting and social media, isolating their partner from friends and whānau, and controlling what their partner wears when meeting others (See Table 2).^{66,96} Young women also reflected on their own jealous behaviour articulating the underlying fear of losing their partner, however, their response was to give young men more space and having a ‘passive’ response to their jealous feelings²⁷. Jealousy was also reinforced by peer groups who would support the jealousy. A number of studies discuss young people’s jealousy over the amount of time their partner spends with friends^{28,66} which leads to arguments and surveillance of time spent with friends. Jealous was also cited by young people as a primary motivator of ‘unhealthy relationships’^{28,40,66,97}. However, in conversations with young people, a number of researchers found that behaviours that were discussed as ‘jealousy’ or controlling behaviours’ were also seen by some young people, especially young women, as the young men showing love, and protection over both themselves as individuals and the relationships. The same behaviours from women are, at times, dismissed as ‘drama’. Jealousy was seen as the primary motivator for online stalking, coercion and control. However, authors agree that insecurity often leads to jealousy with young women feeling that young men were not as committed to the relationship and young men feeling that they needed to restrict interactions between their female partner and other⁶⁶.

EMERGING TREND? SPITTING, HITTING AND STRANGULATION.

Absent in the academic literature, but of concern to the authors are reports of increasing levels of violence (slapping, spitting and strangulation) being accepted as “usual” during sex. We have noticed an increase through conversations with young people, particularly university students. A Prof Beres teaches a paper on preventing sexual

violence. This year (2020), the paper began just after the completion of the Grace Millane trial. During the trial, the defence argued that Ms Millane was interested in strangulation during sex and that this was an example of a 'normal sex act' (e.g. strangulation) gone wrong. Some analysis of this case pointed to the increase in 'consensual rough sex' as a defence usually against rape charges. This case sparked conversations with senior gender studies students, including students enrolled in a paper on preventing sexual violence. A number of articles in the student newspaper that referred to consensual strangulation (referred to colloquially as choking) were presented to the students during class. AProf Beres was shocked at the way in which students took strangulation during sex as normal. They were very adamant that this type of strangulation during sex had no connection to violence, and resisted attempts to make that connection. Because the sex, including the strangulation, was constructed as consensual, it was presumed to be ok. It is troubling that this normalising of strangulation was coming in the wake of recent law changes in New Zealand that created a separate offence of strangulation within the New Zealand Family Violence Act.

This normalisation of violence within sex is likely linked to the increase in awareness and acceptance of BDSM (bondage, discipline and sadomasochism) and the use of violence in pornography. BDSM though, is generally practised within a community with strong guidelines, including the teaching of techniques and surveillance. The normalisation of these practices comes with a lack of community oversight and means that those engaging in the practices are doing so without necessary education or training. This is reflective of the more recent acceptance and popularity of anal sex, whereby many young people are engaging in anal sex without appropriate knowledge and practice of safety techniques such as the use of lubrication.

We searched for literature to better understand the normalisation of violence (including hitting and strangulation) within sexual relationships. We located one poll commissioned by the BBC that interviewed over 2000 UK women between the ages of 18 and 39⁹⁸. Women reported they had been slapped (59%), choked (38%), gagged (34%), spat on (20%), had their hair pulled (63%) and bitten (59%) during sex. For each of these behaviours, there appear to be trends with younger women (18-24 years old) reporting more incidents than the older age groups in the sample. For strangulation, in particular, there appears to be a trend based related to age with 54% of 18-24-year-old women reporting choking during sex compared with 23% of 35-39-year-old women. Of women who reported experiencing at least one of these behaviours 56% said they were unwanted at least some of the time, 46% said they felt pressured or coerced at least some of the time, and 20% said that the experiences left them feeling upset or frightened at least once.

With an absence of literature, we had a brief look at Tik Tok posts to see if young people were talking about these behaviours on that platform. One man talked about how he wanted to "choke" women until he could "see the fear in their eyes" and there were posts from women talking about experiencing these behaviours during sex.

We present this here as a potentially important and troubling trend that may be worth investigating further. If it is the case that forms of violence are becoming normalised within sex, it will create further difficulties engaging with young people to understand when and how certain behaviours are harmful. Research is needed to understand better whether or not, and how these behaviours are becoming normalised.

TABLE 2: UNHEALTHY AND HARMFUL RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIOURS

Behaviour	Description	Gendered	Impact	Studied in Aotearoa?	Age Differences?
Non-consensual sex					
Pressure to have sex ^{28,31,40,56,57,99}	Various levels of pressure to engage in sexual activity in a relationship context a) 'he really wanted it' ⁹⁹ b) 'don't be a baby about it' verbal pressure ⁹⁹ c) Threatening to end the relationship ⁹⁹	Pressure discussed as generally coming from young men toward young women	Sexual coercion, sexual violence	Yes, including Māori and Rainbow community	Across all ages
Sexual coercion ^{28,49,56}	Linked to other behaviour below a) Alcohol b) 'Pleasing' c) Sex drive discourse d) Emotional manipulation e) 'Good girlfriend' f) Sex drive discourse g) Financial dependency h) Sending nudes	Higher rates of sexual coercion from men towards women.		Yes– including Māori; Rainbow communities	
Coercive Control					
Blackmail ^{28,63,100}	Using nude photos or photos of couples together to make young women do things – also used in relation to cultural notions of	Generally, more likely that the blackmailing behaviour is perpetrated by men as a	Used to get young people to engage in behaviours they don't want to do.	Yes – including youth from migrant families	Across all ages but higher levels in adolescence.

	honour/shame with young people engaged in relationships; also social media used as a technique for blackmail in Asian Migrant communities as well as Pakeha groups.	means of control and coercion.			
Checking up/turning up – physically ^{28,60,61}	Turning up to house unannounced/ expecting to come to all events.	Men more likely to exhibit this behaviour	Young women feel ‘owned’; can lead to violence, other forms of coercion	Yes	18-25
Controlling what someone should wear ^{40,42,56,61,63}	Making comments about someone’s clothing, telling them they cannot/should not wear certain things.	Yes – comes from young men toward young women; sometimes linked to the idea of ideal femininity and not looking like a slut	Powerlessness from young women; lowered self-esteem	Yes including a study on honour-based violence in NZ with migrant Asian youth	18-25
Financial control/support ^{28,40,45,56,101}	1)Having a partner who has financial resources seen as important – even if the relationship is violent/coercive. Seen in rural communities and in alt. ed. environments where young women may not have a lot of places to go if a relationship isn’t working 2) also seen in terms of expectations of behaviour if the man is paying for dates etc. – ‘what do I get in return.’ 3)controlling money in the relationship/keeping money from a partner 4) used in tandem with online surveillance, for example, gives	Yes – generally women looking for a male with a good job/money. Coercion related to men in relationships.	Young women feel weighing up ‘stability’ with coercive behaviour; lack of autonomy; effects ability to leave the relationship; isolation;	NZ – one study Māori, and another alt ed; Rainbow communities	Range of ages – tends to be linked with socio-economic status. This doesn’t mean that middle class don’t look for good financial skills – just weighting is different and outcomes.

	bank card to partner, then tracks places they visit.				
Isolating from friends/whanau ^{28,49,56}	Trying to keep a partner from others – various means used including monitoring social media, taking car keys, not allowed to talk to others	More likely that men do this to women than vice versa.		NZ – Māori one study; Rainbow communities – note that not being out/fear of being outed also plays into isolation for queer and trans youth	
Yelling at each other/arguments/drama ⁶⁰	Slippage between what is abuse/argument/underlying gendered power/drama.	More likely to be described by young women about male behaviour except when discussing behaviour between peers about a relationship – for example when a relationship goes live on Facebook then female peers create ‘drama’ fuelled by jealousy.			
Verbal abuse/being ‘lippy’ ^{28,56}	Using words instead of physical violence/also used to describe women being ‘lippy’ as a precursor to physical violence. Verbal abuse, called names, put down, humiliated, insulted	Sometimes discussed as more females doing the behaviour;	Viewed by some young people as a precursor to physical violence from men; seen that women as more verbally abusive.	NZ -Māori; Rainbow communities – note that threatening to out someone; not using correct pronouns; questioning identity unique	High school/All youth

				to rainbow communities	
Mind games/making you feel not right in the head ^{28,56,57,60}	Threats of suicide if someone leaves; emotional manipulation; 'true love means staying together.'	More likely female feel this way- and men do the behaviour		NZ - Māori	
Infidelity/betrayal ^{28,57,65}	Either in the past where partners have cheated or in the present		If in past relationships young people discuss how they struggle to trust their present partner	NZ – Māori one study	
Checking up using social media ^{27,51,56,60,63}	Asking for passwords to accounts then checking messages; checking social media to find out where the partner has been, who they are hanging out with; monitoring behaviour on mobile phones. Seems to be one of the first things to appear in unhealthy relationships⁶⁰. Also calling/texting frequently to find locations, what partner is doing.	More likely that men are doing the behaviour though girls and boys have both exhibited this behaviour and gender differences are debated.	Some young people don't see checking up as controlling; others do	Also seen in Asian migrant youth in NZ; Rainbow communities	
Controlling partner's social media accounts ^{6,51,102}	Asking partners to delete people from social media accounts or gaining access to accounts and deleting people. Young people link this behaviour to jealousy.	Appears to be more likely that young men will ask young women to remove other men and friends from profile; young women ask to remove ex-girlfriends.	Social isolation from others, minimised support network, further tension in the relationship, coercive control		Adolescents
Engage in public disagreements online ²	YP are more likely to engage in drama when it is online bc of online disinhibition effect	More likely to be done by girls, a perception that girls like to engage in drama for attention	Causes people to break up causes bullying,		
Physical Abuse					

Physical violence and destruction of property ^{28,33,56,57}	Hitting; destroying item; damaging goods/walls etc/hiding throwing away hormones/medication/gender identity items/	More likely to be perpetrated by men.	Limits contact with others (e.g. if a piece of tech is broken like a phone) ⁶ ; group of young Māori discuss the impact of violence as being death, suicide, loss of confidence and effects wāhine ²⁸ Young women more likely to talk about 'keeping secrets of male partners behaviour as what if you love him' ²⁸	NZ – Māori – one study;	Similar patterns across ages
Stalking					
Cyber-stalking ^{6,28,43,56,61}	Often driven by jealousy to find out where the partner is; however, also used as a way to check out potential partners. Also, used via banking with some young people – young man gives bank card to young women, then tracks movements, social activity and spending.	More likely to be discussed by females about their male partner's behaviour;	Sometimes seen by young women as a gesture of care and love; also see as control. Some young men see the behaviour as showing a partner that he cares.	Yes	18-25 in NZ study
Sexting and sending nudes					
Sending unsolicited dick pics ^{25,49,67,94,103}	Boys send pictures of their genitalia without consent. As boys reach young adulthood, there is some recognition of the harm unsolicited dick pics cause to girls ⁶⁷	Young women are seen as 'sluts', young men as confident and macho – sexual agency seen in young men – not young women who seen as fulfilling male desire ⁹⁵ expectation of return images. The attitude of 'boys will be boys' and playing into sexual drive	Causes harm to girls, normalises the behaviour amongst peers;		As boys reach young adulthood there is some recognition of the harm unsolicited dick pics cause to girls ⁶⁷

		discourse. Can be linked to traditional ideas of dating			
Sexting/non-consensual sharing of sexts ^{4,49,95,104,105}	Sharing of digital images and sex chat	Yes – male sex drive discourse; slut-shaming; pressure from young men; humour as a risk buffer for men but not women. Effects minorities (race, ability, etc.) more. They are still caught in a discourse of male pleasure and pleasing young men. Also higher ‘risk’ of shame, double standard; Seen by some young women as pleasurable and in right circumstances can make young women feel positive about body ⁹⁵ . Young women were judgemental about other young women sending sexts at a younger age – ‘not one of those girls’ as well as judgement from male peers. Girls feel they ‘should sext to please males – this pressure overrides the fear of potential consequences ¹⁰⁴	Lead to bullying when images shared (towards women). Can lead to feelings of shame/blame either internally or externally but this is also resisted by some women ⁹⁵ Within a relationship seen as a way to build intimacy and trust ⁹⁵	Yes ^{4,105}	Increasing likely to be sexting as they got older one study 31% at 12- 13 years; 42% at 14- 15 years and 75% 16-18 years also younger saw sexting as joking around/having fun with friends whereas older young adults saw sexting as something in romantic/sexual relationships ¹⁰⁴
Ghosting	Stopping all online contact without any warning		Provides protection of emotional vulnerability, can exacerbate miscommunication, enables saving face		

KEY INFLUENCES (TABLE 3)**PEERS**

Research has shown that the largest influence on young people in terms of their relationships are their peers¹⁰⁶. Young people's friendships have been found to be predictive of relationship coercion and violence¹⁰⁶. The reason for this is that friendships (particularly around early adolescence) become a place where communication, conflict resolution and trust are established¹⁰⁶. Violence is also linked to peer groups when one peer perpetrates aggressive behaviour in a relationship that it raises the likelihood of other peers in the group having conflict in their relationships¹⁰⁶.

Peers can play a large role in how and when young people begin relationships. Part of the background research young people do when initiating relationships is consulting friends about their romantic interest and getting their opinion and assessment. Talking to friends about someone you're interested in is particularly common amongst young women². Alongside romantic curiosity fuelling researching behaviours, young women articulate a sense of responsibility to do "due diligence" in assessing the suitability of a potential partner and consulting peers to affirm their assessment. Young men are more likely to encourage their peers to 'talk to her' whereas young women are more passive and encourage their peers to 'give it go'⁶⁶, meaning they encourage friends to get involved with someone. The desire to avoid exclusion from peer conversations around sex and relationships puts pressure on some young people to engage in dating and relationships before a young person may feel ready²⁷. Young people may also engage in sexual behaviour or get into relationships in order to gain and maintain status within a friendship or peer group. For instance, young men may involve themselves in relationships with young women they do not really love/like in order to keep up with their peers¹⁰⁷.

Peers are also the main source of information about relationships, both in terms of behaviour and knowledge but also attitudes and beliefs around dating and relationships. The normality of particular behaviours both inside and outside of school was seen as how some young people 'learned' about relationships and sex. One example was the presence of sexual touching and kissing being readily accepted in the school grounds between couples¹⁰⁸.

Among young men, there is also an attitude of "bros before hoes", which means that they often put their relationships with other men ahead of their relationships with women. Young men are also more likely to listen to their male peers around relationships issues and are more 'loyal' to their peers than their partners. However, young women see their female peers as creating 'drama' if concerns are raised about their relationship. Young women are more likely to put the relationship before their peer relationships. The underlying idea is that women need to be loyal to their man.

PORNOGRAPHY

The average age in New Zealand for first seeing pornography was 13. While the majority of these experiences were by accident (via viruses, pop-ups, or miss-clicking links), it was also common for young people to go looking for pornography out of curiosity or peer pressure¹⁰⁹. One-third of young people thought that it was ok for teens to look at porn, and 9 out of 10 were against children (those under 13) seeing porn. Fifteen percent of young people between 14-17 years old in New Zealand watched pornography monthly, and 8% weekly. Young people in New Zealand on average would watch pornography for several minutes to half an hour and daily/weekly pornography watching was uncommon. Engaging with pornography was often social, including the circulation of related memes on social media, jokes between young men, and the showing of porn inside and outside of school¹⁰⁹.

Queer youth were more likely to have positive attitudes towards watching pornography compared with their heterosexual counterparts; however, they were still critical of the stereotypes present in pornography. This was particularly the case for gay males. Lesbian women were critical of the fact that much of the lesbian pornography was made by and for straight men. Part of the reason why queer youth used pornography was because of a perceived lack of relevant sexuality education¹⁰⁹.

REPORTED REASONS FOR WATCHING PORNOGRAPHY. Young people watched pornography for a variety of reasons including curiosity around sex, around their own body, niche fantasies, learning about how to please their partner, or because watching pornography was seen as inappropriate^{109,110}. Pornography was also seen as a way to deal with boredom, or for the purposes of stress relief, masturbation, to work out sexual orientation, to feel better about their own body as well as being part of an active fantasy life^{109,110}. Young people also reported watching pornography within their romantic relationships. For some young people, they talked about porn as a form of entertainment, not unlike other mainstream media. Young men reported more frequent use of pornography.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS PORNOGRAPHY. Young people were critical of the gender stereotyping in pornography— specifically the dominant male, submissive female as well as problematic stereotypes in queer porn¹⁰⁹. Overall, participants in the New Zealand classification office study believed that pornography had a negative effect on relationships with unrealistic ideas of sex, body image, consent, gender roles, safer sex and communication. However, young people also noted that there were positives of watching pornography, including learning about new sexual activities to try, and fun and pleasure¹⁰⁹. Both young women and young men shared that they were influenced by pornography, and as a result of watching pornography, they had specific ideas about how to please their partners. Males, in particular, discussed wanting to try what they saw in pornography, while females (who tend to watch less pornography) were less interested in trying things out¹⁰⁹.

One of the largest concerns from young people was that pornography could lead to a sense of entitlement from young men, and that young men would think they did not need to communicate or understand consent within a sexual relationship because in pornography ‘they just get started’. They also expressed concern that watching too much pornography might lead to erectile dysfunction or addiction to pornography. Young people in two New Zealand research studies did not think that pornography to lead to aggressive or violent sex. Generally, young people who had some sexual experience or had good sexuality education from school or whanau were less likely to think that pornography had a large impact on their sex lives¹⁰⁹.

IMPACT OF PORNOGRAPHY. Young people are gaining more critical literacy skills in relation to pornography; however, this doesn’t mean that porn has reduced impact on how young people see sex and relationships. Far from it, we know that media, in general, can play a large role in reinforcing heteronormative discourses and normalising certain behaviours. There are documented negative effects of pornography, specifically related to young people’s expectation of sex. Males who watch porn are more likely to report that their expectations of sex are different than the reality, including how consent works, how female bodies look, and more aggressive sex been seen as the norm, and male pleasure being central to the sexual experience^{111,112}. Pornography is often used as sexuality education by young people which impacts how young people form their attitudes and beliefs around sex¹⁰⁹. Viewing pornography can contribute to negative body image for young people, and young people worry about expectations of partners in relation to sex. They are concerned that partners will expect them to be “good” in bed and that they may not live up to their expectations.

Young men tend to minimise the violence and coercion they see in pornography,¹¹³ and distance themselves from the violence that they did see by stating that they did not search for it. When researchers questioned the degradation of women in the pornography young men often responded with humour (minimising the impact of pornography) and rationalised the choice to include the violence in the pornography as the “individual choice” of the actors^{114,113}.

ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY. Young people are able to discuss the issues with pornography and articulate the complexities around pleasure, addiction, and how pornography relates to their sexual experiences, and they express a need to discuss these concerns^{109,112}. It is important to recognise that young people are not merely cultural dupes with no critical engagement around pornography.

ALCOHOL/DRUGS

Alcohol and drugs are used in a variety of ways in young people’s relationships. Firstly, alcohol is a central figure in hook-ups within older adolescences and young people in their early 20s. New Zealand binge drinking culture has been well documented¹¹⁵ however, the behaviour expected from men and women when intoxicated differs and

follows along a similar discourse consistent with the sexual double standard with women needing to be seen as not so drunk so they would be 'easy' 'trashy' or 'not classy'¹¹⁵. Men are rewarded for heavily drinking. Alcohol is used as a social lubricant within casual sex situations with young women discussing how a few drinks allow them to do things they usually would not, and also allows them the confidence to pursue sexual encounters^{116,117}. The flip side of alcohol being used as a social lubricant is that young women also used being 'smashed' as a reason for sex that is 'regretted', sex that would likely be not consensual¹¹⁶. The phrase 'up for it' is often used both in terms of alcohol and sexual availability. Alcohol consumption is also used as an excuse for behaviour that young people may not have usually engaged in^{28,40,60,116}. Alcohol is also used by men to coerce women into sex with the expectation that if men provide the drinks that women will provide sex later in the night¹¹⁶. Men also use alcohol to get women intoxicated with the aim of having sex. Young people clearly state that alcohol and drugs are the main reason for relationship 'dramas', coercive sex, rape and physical violence and increased arguments between couples and increase in acting on jealous feelings^{28,31,40,96,117,118}.

MEDIA

Young people's conceptualization of romance is shaped by entertainment media such as film, TV, advertisements, and celebrity culture; that is not to say that entertainment media directly dictates how people think and act about love but rather that these sources provide a language through which one can articulate their own experiences in ways others will understand, a language which both enables and constrains acts of romance¹¹⁹. Consciously or not, the messages conveyed by the media about love and romance are internalised and contribute to an individual's understanding of what love is and does. Cultural and media references then are sometimes a way of making sense of a situation or communicating that to others, e.g. "our date was so amazing it felt like a movie". The use of cultural references to make sense of one's personal life is particularly common among young people and internet culture, in particular, meme culture.

The building of expectations around romance can also lead to disappointment and loss when our unconscious expectations are not met, such that one can feel deprivation even when the relationship overall is happy and healthy. Entertainment media also reinforces a connection between violence and coercion and love such that one may glorify a relationship characterised by destruction and unhealthiness because it appears to satisfy the expectations ingrained in us by entertainment media¹²⁰.

#RELATIONSHIPGOALS AND #RELATIONSHIPTIPS

The visibility of relationships online has to lead to a lot of ‘performance’ of relationship online. Part of young people’s language of romance is articulated through the #relationshipgoals hashtag (sometimes also referred to as ‘couple goals;’ Māori dominant NZ sample)¹²¹. #relationshipgoals is a popular hashtag used on social media sites such as Twitter and Instagram; users add this tag to a post they are making to indicate that they believe this to be a goal for romantic couples. Typically posts like these feature an attractive, heterosexual monogamous Caucasian couple doing an activity together such as performing a two-person yoga pose, eating pizza and watching a movie together, travelling to exciting international destinations, giving each other large extravagant gifts, performing pranks on each other, or more recently, performing a ‘cute’ couple dance on Tik Tok. All of these posts suggest that these activities are key for a ‘good’ relationship, and #relationshipgoals is used to compare the success or quality of romantic relationships and to express social status¹²².

#relationshipgoals can be detrimental because it can create unachievable and unrealistic goals which young people feel like they have to replicate. Social media trends such as #relationshipgoals influence young people to curate their profiles and how they present their relationships online, encouraging them to hide the negative or unhealthy aspects of their relationships and only show the image of happiness and perfection. In doing so, trends like #relationshipgoals could be used to mask coercive or abusive behaviours occurring within the relationship from onlookers online. #relationshipgoals has also been critiqued for glorifying superficial aspects of relationships including materialism, physical beauty, and competition and not accurately representing peoples’ relationships.

The focus on relationships on social media persists including with young people; as this report is being written a trending hashtag on Tik Tok is #relationshiptips with 418.1 million views as of writing. Typical posts under #relationshiptips include an adult giving general advice for those in relationships, e.g. “4 things people mistake for love: 1. constantly obsessing over somebody and feeling incomplete when they’re not around, 2. constantly sacrificing your needs for someone else...” etc. (@emily.capshaw on Tik Tok, ‘We often mistake co-dependency and egoic attachment for love’). Generally, the content appears to be thoughtful and helpful things to consider when you’re in a relationship, but there are also posts tagged #relationshiptips that reinforce gender stereotypes and roles, e.g. “you say to a man ‘I feel so safe whenever I’m around you’, just saying that to a guy makes him feel like superman, but more specifically it makes him feel like superman with you. Not everyone makes him feel that way so if he feels that powerful when he’s with you he’s going to be drawn to you” (@thematthewhussey on Tik Tok, ‘Man-melting phrases that make a guy fall for you’). Therefore while there appears to be more content under #relationshiptips that provide genuinely good advice and thoughtful points, there is also gendered and unsound advice that can contribute to unhealthy attitudes and behaviours in young people. Young people have a sound knowledge of how to curate their social media pages to show particular

aspects of themselves to peer groups, family and other, sometimes having multiple accounts. However, it is unclear how this plays out in the maintenance of relationships and in situations of coercive control.

WHĀNAU/PARENTS

Peers are the most influential on young peoples' decisions around sex and relationship; however, we do know that whānau and parents do play a role. Young people can sometimes mirror the relationships and behaviour they witness at home, and early experiences of violence also affect relationship outcomes in later life¹⁰⁶. This seems to be the case particularly for taitamariki²⁸ and youth from some migrant families from honour-based societies¹²³. Youth from some migrant families may also experience other pressures related to relationships, particularly if they are told they should not date, and they are. This can be exploited by coercive partners who know they are less likely to talk to an adult about what is going on because they are not supposed to be dating in the first place. We also know that young people want to hear the values and thoughts of their parents and whānau. Young people want to be able to talk to a trusted adult about relationships, pornography, and sex. However, they were concerned about being judged, getting in trouble (with watching porn) or feeling embarrassed. Young people talking to their parents and whānau is a protective factor developing healthy relationships, but often these conversations need to start quite young. Therefore it is important for parents and whānau to take steps to engage with young people from an early age. We have not engaged in-depth in the literature on communication between parents and young people about relationships and sex because this type of communication works best when it comes from the parent, and the purpose of this literature review is to engage with young people directly.

TABLE 3: KEY INFLUENCES

Behaviour/attitude	Description	Gendered	Impact	NZ	Age
Peers					
Gossip from peers ⁶⁵	Stories of infidelity, negative opinions, stories escalate in terms of details and assumptions ⁶⁵	While all genders gossip tends to be at a different level with young women compared to young men.	Undermine relationships if the information isn't accurate; peers important in the maintenance of relationship in young people (up to 18 – 20) ⁶⁵		All ages – but more prevalent in high school-aged
Peer pressure to 'Try it out' ⁴⁵	There is social pressure to begin having relationships, experimenting with sex, or even sending nude photos.	This can put pressure on men to initiate relationships and can focus men on seeing sex as an achievement. For young women, it can mean that peers put pressure on them to begin or continue a relationship.	Reinforces to young men that sex is an achievement, can be linked to coercive sex. For women can lead to them staying in a relationship that is coercive/abusive.	Yes	More prevalent around high school age young people.
Negative language used by peers to describe partner ⁴³	For example – ball and chain; being 'whipped/pussy whipped'; wears the pants;	Used to describe women in a sexist manner	Reinforces males need to be dominant in a relationship; misogyny;	Yes	All ages
Witness violence/coercion within peer group ⁵⁴		Yes –males witnessing violence towards females tend to increase violence within relationships	More likely to perpetrate relationship violence if they witness similar behaviour in their peer group		High school age
Social status ^{28,45}	The status associated with being in a relationship	The same on the surface for young people, however,	Young women discuss getting involved in relationships because	Yes – including in high schools and among Māori youth	More present in high school situations

		has underlying stud/slut if involved in casual sex	friends are; also that friends can pressure around sexual acts in relationships; lack of autonomy		
Social support	Peers are generally the first place young people go to for advice.	Both women and men do this	The range of advice they get may be poor, and they may not be equipped for dealing with serious relationship issues. Eruera suggests providing young people with the skills to support each other.		
Alcohol/drugs					
Alcohol/Drugs ^{28,31,40,56,60,116,117}	<p>A) used, at times, as a social lubricant to engage in a casual sexual relationship and perceived as part of sexual agency^{116,117}</p> <p>b) increase physical violence</p> <p>c) increase fights</p> <p>d) used to get a young woman drunk to have sex</p> <p>e) coercive sex</p> <p>f) rape</p> <p>g) used as an excuse for behaviour including 'regretted sexual behaviour'¹¹⁶</p> <p>h) cheating when drunk/high</p> <p>i) pressure from a partner to use drugs/alcohol</p>	<p>Yes- young women feel more able to access casual sex; however, young men use alcohol in sexual assaults; young women feel more vulnerable to sexual assault while under the influence – less so for men. Men monitoring intoxication in expectation of sex – give alcohol to young women thinking they will get sexual favours later¹¹⁶; women's fault if raped when drinking¹¹⁶</p>	<p>Engage in activities they may not have done while sober¹¹⁷; 'Fuels arguments²⁸; makes people more 'vulnerable to being taken advantage of'¹¹⁶</p>	Yes Including Māori	<p>Most literature discussed young people over the age of 16/18. For 14-17-year-olds see¹¹⁶; Linked to Roastbusters</p>

Media					
#relationshipgoals ¹²¹	Social media hashtag attached to posts that the poster thinks is a goal for people in relationships b) used in speech ('goals') at schools when couples are seen hugging/kissing/couple activities socially ¹²¹	Often but not always reflects traditional gendered stereotypes; frustration from young women also creates a 'not goals' around relationship behaviour and link with neoliberal good subject primary effect women ¹²¹	Creates an unachievable goal for how relationships should highlight things like travel, material possessions, physical beauty, athleticism etc.	Y	Research 14- 18yrs NZ
Media – movies, music videos, tv (not social media) ^{28,42}	Where young people learn about relationships	Reflecting gendered behaviour in media unless good critical media literacy in place	Can lead to unhealthy behaviours, and expectations in some cases; Also, young people are critical of messages and able to resist them, while also stating that they felt expected to maintain standards seen in media.	NZ- Māori; Asian Migrant Youth	High school
Pornography	Images, movies, hentai, message boards, drawings of sexual acts	Yes – more likely that men will talk about porn consumption than women and are more likely to watch porn. A double standard in regards to how women who watch porn are perceived. Young people clearly see the dominance/submission patterns in pornography.	Real-life vs porn sex confusion; unrealistic expectations of sex; not understanding the how of doing a particular sexual act for example lube is required for anal sex. Attitudes towards women are effected by porn – more likely to have sexist attitudes; increased in sexual violence; can lead to erectile dysfunction in some young people;	Yes	Porn has a negative impact on children; however, there is mixed evidence about the long term impact of porn on older young adults. Teenagers do see porn as an issue, and there is evidence to suggest there is an effect on attitudes and behaviours of young people from porn consumption.

			concerns that consent not fully understood; used as sexuality education. Positives – can lead to an understanding of self in terms of sexuality.		
Whānau/Family					
Family reputation/honour ^{42,63}	Plays out particular in migrant (and religious – get ref) groups – that family will be brought into disrepute if dating/relationship between young people – however, this can be used by male partners to be coercive and controlling. Can involve ‘ruining fathers name’; getting pregnant; don’t be seen with boys’. How honour/reputation plays out is different around families and shouldn’t be seen as a monolithic concept.		Can lead to violence from families; coercion and control from male partners	NZ - See Mayeda ¹²³ work for migrant youth perspectives in NZ – same themes	All ages
What young people see in the home environment – this can be parents, siblings, extended whanau ^{28,100} “If you grew up in a violent relationship, then that’s how its’ gonna be.”	This can have different influences depending on what is seen – violence in the home can influence what young people do in relationships.		Can lead to violent relationships as mirroring how issues dealt within the home; also can lead to positive relationships. However, peers are more influential than the home environment.	NZ – Māori; Asian Migrant Youth	High school students

Whānau ^{28,63}	Influence of family on how young people do their relationships – especially noticeable in results of Eruera’s ²⁸ thesis		Depends on family/Whānau. If honour is part of the culture, this can be a silencing feature for young people who are experiencing coercive relationships	NZ- Māori and Migrant Asian community	
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UNDERLYING KEY THEMES

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

A key theme running throughout the literature on young people and their relationships is the importance for young people to be able to understand the context of various behaviours. While they demonstrate knowledge that some overt behaviours are harmful, they struggle identifying more subtle behaviours in the same way. This is likely, at least in part, due to the way that contexts can shift the meaning of the behaviours. For instance, some behaviours used as part of coercive control may not be problematic on their own. A boyfriend may text his girlfriend asking where she is in case she is available to talk and if she says she’s out with friends he may respond with “ok, have fun”. Checking up becomes a problem when it is ongoing or when the response is anything less than supportive of her spending time with her friends. Young people are able to recognise that persistence in checking up is a problem, but it is not easy to determine when exactly it becomes a problem. Similarly, when it comes to sexual consent, it is not possible to put together a list of behaviours that always mean consent or always mean refusal of consent. Communication of consent is more complex than that, yet people repeatedly demonstrate that they are capable of such complex communication¹²⁴.

Similarly, it’s important to point out that young people stay in harmful relationships for the same reasons that young people stay in healthy relationships – because there are positive and beneficial aspects to those relationships despite clear psychological costs. No relationship is all bad. So, working with young people to identify harmful relationships must acknowledge this complexity and work with them to develop skills to read complex situations.

USE OF HUMOUR

The discussion of the use of humour by young people is a theme that runs through this report. Humour is used by young people in the following ways:

1. To allow women to take sexual risks online. When young women's flirtatious behaviour online towards young men gets read as too sexy, or too much, they may respond by saying they were 'just joking'. Turning the previous flirting or sexual behaviour into a joke means they save face, but also allows them to negotiate the sexual double standard and maintain their 'good girl' image while taking risks and expressing their sexuality⁹⁵.
2. To allow men to protect themselves from shame and rejection. Similar to the first point about women, men will also say they were "just joking" if a sexual advance is not reciprocated. The intention is slightly different for young men, as they are protecting themselves from the shame of rejection, rather than negotiating the sexual double standard.
3. To resist harassment. Young women, in particular use humour to resist harassment, particularly online. This can include a humorous rebuttal to a specific comment or more elaborate online responses. For example, *instagranniepants* is an Instagram page from a woman who posts screenshots of harassing messages she receives on Tinder along with caricatured sketches of the men naked²⁵. This type of humour can raise awareness of behaviours that are only occurring in 'private' online interactions; the humour also shames men engaging in harassing behaviours. At the same time, the humour used can also minimise the emotional reactions of young women sometimes experience when receiving unsolicited dick pics. As discussed in the section on sexting, men's bodies are often seen as humorous, whereas women's nudity was not a joke. Therefore any humour related to resisting dick pics and online harassment still benefits young men and often minimises young women's reactions. It is important to note that this does not mean that websites such as *instagranniepants* do not have a place in resisting harassment, it means a more complex gendered analysis is needed to understand how young people negotiate their relationships, nudity, and hooking up in a culture of dick pics and online coercion.
4. To deflect serious conversations about rape, domestic violence or problems with their relationship. Generally, humour used in this way undermines women's experiences of violence and coercion and normalised the behaviour. There are young men who resist this type of humour. However, it can be difficult for men to stand up to their peer group where this violence may be normalised.

SEXUAL AGENCY/SUBJECTIVITY

“Sexual agency is an individual’s effort to use their sexuality to influence their life course”^{125(p)}. Bay-Cheng emphasises it is important to remember that sexual agency is distinct from sexual autonomy (the degree of control one has over one’s sexual life), and sexual assertiveness (the ability to ask for desired activities). Understanding young people’s sexuality through the lens of sexual agency brings into focus how they work to enact their sexual lives. This view takes into consideration the challenges and limitations of their ability to control their sexual lives. For instance, young people who experience marginalisation may have limited sexual autonomy, yet may exhibit sophisticated sexual agency¹²⁶. Bay-Cheng critiques approaches that conflate specific behaviours (such as condom use or leaving a coercive relationship) with sexual agency, arguing that this view of sexual agency leads to a version of sexual agency available only to those most privileged young people. Furthermore, it creates a dichotomy between agents and victims^{34,126}, implying that young people who do not exhibit a desired form of agency are then victims.

Building on this version of sexual agency, Cense¹²⁷ raises the point that for young people, sexual agency is not an individual attribute¹²⁶. She developed the concept of bonded-agency to identify how young people’s sexual agency is influenced by and incorporated within their peer groups and their families. This view of sexual agency requires educators and scholars to ask *how* and *within which contexts* young people exercise agency, rather than whether or not someone is exercising agency. It also requires an acknowledgement that this might look quite different for different young people due to structural inequalities. This view of sexual agency comes from a position that all young people have access to some forms of sexual agency. Thus, educators or health promoters should acknowledge and value the agency young people bring to the table. Working with young people from a position of sexual agency requires that we acknowledge the ways in which young people attempt to influence their sexual lives, regardless of how “successful” these efforts may appear to an outsider.

INTERNALISED PRESSURE

Often when the term peer pressure is used, it conjures an image of a group of young people actively encouraging someone to do something, like drink alcohol or get involved with a relationship. Peer pressure, though, works not only through direct pressure from others but also through internalised messages. For instance, many women have consented to sex that is unwanted and harmful, not due to direct pressure from a partner but do to internalised acceptance of available discourses, either because they do not realise there are other options, or because they are prioritising those discourses over personal needs or desires⁸³.

A deeper understanding of how norms and discourses become internalised may help think through the development of a social change campaign. So, please bear with us while we venture into some Foucauldian theory, particularly his ideas around power, discourse and discipline. His metaphor of the panopticon is particularly helpful here. The panopticon is a prison design, with a tall guard tower in the middle, surrounded by a circle of prison cells (see Fig 1.). The guards (from the guard tower) can see into each prison cell at any time, but the inmates cannot see into the guard tower. The inmates then never know when they are being watched so self-regulate their behaviour as if guards are always present. Foucault uses this model as a metaphor of the way that we monitor our own behaviours based on our perceptions of what is socially desirable and based on dominant norms related to sexuality. Thus, behaviour is shaped by social norms and ideas, even when we do not have direct pressure to conform.

Fig 1. The Panopticon



We have already discussed how young people and their relationships are shaped by dominant discourses, including the male sexual drive discourse, the male in the head and the have/hold discourse. Young women especially discuss aspects of self-surveillance in terms of their understanding of what it means to be a 'good girlfriend', to maintain themselves in terms of looks and behaviour and how to be in a relationship as a means of being a successful subject⁴⁰.

A note is required on discourses – when discussing discourses; we are looking at how knowledge is produced and understood in social contexts. Dominant discourses appear to be authoritative, and 'natural' and therefore are taken on board without question. However, discourses are not only relegated to language, they produce meaning, have power to govern social norms, and behaviours. Discourses can also be seen as social practices, and these practices are just as important as the language that we use⁸³.

An understanding of this internalisation of discourse is important when examining young people and their relationships, which are often governed by discourses and self-surveillance. Evidence of the effects of these discourses can be seen throughout Tables 1 and 4. Table 3 (Internalised pressures) identifies a range of internalised ideas about relationships that shape young people and their relationships. Beliefs about masculinity and the role of men in relationships is also a clear example of this type of thinking.

These discourses are inherently social and reflect collective ideas and norms. Yet, working in with discourses brings about particular challenges because they go beyond the surface level understanding that people (including young people) have of their behaviour. If you confront young people directly about these discourses, they may easily dismiss the ideas. Of course, they understand that not all men want sex all the time but shaking those deeply held and taken for granted beliefs about masculinity is difficult.

TABLE 4: INTERNALISED PRESSURES – ASSOCIATED WITH HETERONORMATIVE DISCOURSES

Behaviour/attitude	Description	Gendered	Impact	Studied in NZ?	Age Differences?
Fear of not being loved - pressure in relationships ^{28,29,40,57}	Fear of relationship ending, or the partner cheating if they do not do what their partner wants – related to sex; also fear of not being loved by anyone else so stay in violent relationships as love the man.	Seems linked to sex in relationships – demands from a male partner. Women are more likely to articulate this fear.	Unwanted and coercive sex; stays in a violent relationship	Yes including NZ Māori	High school and college-aged
Needing someone ⁵⁷	Getting into a relationship because of a need to be with someone – different than trying it out because they are looking for a connection in life – then lack of friends around once abuse starts.	Accounts come from young women in abusive relationships	Stay in unhealthy relationships, but there can be positive outcomes as a desire for close connection in a healthy relationship		
“Good girlfriend” ⁴⁰	Internal pressure to meet socially prescribed ideas of what ‘should’ be done in a relationship. For example: ensuring man’s happiness over their own; do what young men want them to do in a relationship, for example, domestic labour, sex, particular clothing. This also links to social media where #relationship goals and curated images of couples influence how young people feel they should look and act.	Yes	Young women struggle to negotiate competing discourses around what it means to be a ‘good girlfriend’ especially in a social media age.		High school: women want to look good for their partner; among emerging adults (18+) more related to looking after man (e.g. laundry, emotional management) but still has elements of appearance management.
Women as caretakers ^{27,28}	Related to emotional work young women do to manage men’s controlling behaviours/violence	Yes, this is about female partners monitoring and pleasing their male partners. If women are moody, it is dismissed not taken as seriously.	Accommodates coercive behaviour of partner and stays in the relationship; loses	Yes including NZ Māori	High school in one study

			self-esteem and connection to peers.		
'Shouldn't be talking to other guys' *jealousy ^{40,42,43,57,61,96}	Young men were controlling interactions between young women and other men. Liked to jealousy – especially in school if girlfriend is at another school	Yes – more likely to me young men who perform this behaviour – however, young women will also call out young men who flirt with other women	Relationship tension; sometimes violence; controlling of space, time with friends.	Yes	Appears more likely in adolescents compared with emerging adults
Ownership ^{28,42,56,61,96}	Young women sometimes report feeling that their partners “own” them. Behaviours include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Popping by unannounced - Sexual entitlement - Forced kissing/fondling - Surveillance - controlling spending money 	Highly gendered space – ownership generally comes from male partners; when the behaviour around ownership comes from female partners the impact is different(Hamberger, 2005)	Increased violence; coercion;	See Mayeda work for migrant youth perspectives in NZ – same themes; Rainbow communities	All ages
In love with them and don't know how to leave ⁹⁶					
Jealousy ^{27,28,40,66,96,97}	Young people report several forms of jealousy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Young women being stopped from working due to male jealousy in a study of rural women in Australia 2) Keeping women from friends/family/whanau 3) Linked with control; stalking; coercion 4) In high school related to a partner being at another school/ friendship group 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blame sometimes placed on women's behaviour/appearance 2. Women's jealous behaviour either seen as more 'passive' or as 'drama.' 3. Male jealous behaviour is seen as coercive and controlling 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Leads to violence 2) Coercion 3) stalking 	Yes	Jealously higher in adolescence, than young adults

Loyalty to partner/husband ^{42,96}	The idea that once committed you stay but also don't talk about abusive behaviour as this would be a betrayal; also has a cultural aspect due to different ideas around the place of husband/male partner and the idea of men being there to control women with the expectation that women follow their husband.	Yes – more likely to be discussed by women towards their male partner	Isolation; staying in violent relationships; struggle with cultural or religious expectations. Linked to ideas around romantic love.		
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SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (SEE TABLE 5)

We reviewed recent population-based social marketing campaigns targeted at young people. The majority of the campaigns were not fully evaluated. Many reported engagement statistics in lieu of effectiveness evaluations. Key themes that ran through existing reports on social marketing included the following:

1. The importance of involving young people at all stages of the development, delivery and evaluation of the campaign to ensure relevance.
2. Many of the campaigns were based on partnerships between government organisations, NGOs and others involved with young people and the subject area.
3. The campaigns all engaged young people across a variety of media, including social media. Few campaigns have attempted to engage young people in newer social media platforms such as SnapChat, and no campaigns could be located that used TikTok. The one using SnapChat (from the UK NICE) was considered highly successful due to the level of engagement, although it is not clear if young people understood the intended message. It consisted of a SnapChat filter of a nose with green snot hanging out of it. The idea was to encourage young people to wash their hand to avoid infections.

Relevant to young people and their relationships, *The Line* has the strongest and most robust evaluation. They have been able to demonstrate population-level change and identify areas of concern. Of note as well, the UK campaign “*This is Abuse*” initially started as two separate campaigns, one focused on sexual consent and the other on

coercion and control. Evaluations of these campaigns highlighted that young people do not see these as separate issues, and the decision was made to bring both campaign goals together into one cohesive campaign.

TABLE 5: OTHER SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Name & Specifications	Content	Methods of engagement	Change measured and notes of interest
<p><i>The Line – You Can’t Undo Violence</i>¹</p> <p>Anti-GBV Australia 12-20 yr 2015-2017</p>	<p>Highlights types of violence that can occur in relationships. Uses tattoo imagery to convey serious, lasting consequences of violence.</p>	<p>Social media, content marketing, ambassadors and partners, resources for “influencers”, public relations, advertising, stakeholder engagement</p>	<p>If they saw the campaign, young people are more likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -talk with others about healthy relationships -feel confident knowing about consent and talking with a partner -to report experiencing victimisation <p>Over the campaign period - Increased positive attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -improved attitudes about victim-blaming and gender roles, esp for young females -rejection of male control, non-physical forms of violence <p>Over the campaign period - Persistent trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -jealousy is seen as an act of love -victim-blaming for women drinking alcohol -some violence is ok as long as there is an apology afterwards <p>Over the campaign period - Increased negative attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the belief that men who take control in their relationship gain respect from friends. -girls’ responsibility to say no to sex
<p><i>Disrespect Nobody</i></p> <p>Healthy Relationship UK 12-18 yr 2017 - Present</p>	<p>Covers a range of topics about relationships, online behaviours, LGBT, relationship abuse, sexting, porn, rape and harassment</p>	<p>TV adverts – body parts (e.g. eyeballs, hands) talk about what is not ok.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evaluation located, it’s likely too early
<p><i>This is Abuse</i>²</p> <p>Relationship violence</p>	<p>Reveals a range of harmful behaviours, shows friends helping each other and stepping in, shows</p>	<p>Radio/TV ads, posters, MTV partnership,</p>	<p>It was initially launched as 2 campaigns, one on coercive control and the other on consent and sex. The evaluation demonstrated that rape and relationship</p>

<p>UK 13-18 yo 2010-2013</p>	<p>fear associated with abusive relationships</p>	<p>materials to those working with teens. Developed storylines in Hollyoaks soap opera.</p>	<p>abuse were not viewed by young people as separate, so the campaigns were joined into one. The Hollyoaks campaign was supported by TV adverts where the actors reflected and talked about the escalating abuse, social media posts where the escalation in storylines was tracked. Made use of existing following of Hollyoaks social media to get the message across. No population-level change was measured, but good engagement and messages from young people that the campaign helped them identify problematic behaviours. To attract boys, they used “in the know” rather than “this is abuse” as it was less threatening to boys. It also partnered with YouTube vloggers. 80% agreed that seeing the videos helped them realise that abuse is not always physical.</p>
<p>#fckhiv Promote HIV testing South Africa Young people (no specified age) 2018</p>	<p>Add on World AIDS day posted on social media. Telling people to #fckhiv by getting tested</p>	<p>Posts and video on social media</p>	<p>Based on one post, 6.8 million engagements, and was trending in 9 minutes. Most used word on social media that day was “tested”. No data on whether it increased testing. Link to video: http://www.welovead.com/en/works/details/7bbwhutAg</p>
<p>#whyichoose³ Anti-smoking Australia 12-25 2018-2019</p>	<p>The annual campaign to get YP talking about the risks of tobacco use benefits to quitting.</p>	<p>Encourages YP to make social media posts with #whyichoose, gets them involved with taking photos with a chalkboard with statements about why they choose not to smoke, or to quit</p>	<p>No info about evaluation, or engagement</p>
<p>Safer Celebrations³ Binge drinking Australia 18-25</p>	<p>An ongoing campaign to encourage “safer celebrating.”</p>	<p>Delivered 2500 promotional products, community stalls, website, survey.</p>	<p>7554 visits to the website, 279 completed a survey. 93% said they always stay with friends on a night out, 80% wait until they are sober to drive. 33% binge drink monthly or weekly.</p>

2018-2019			
<p>You Know Different⁴ HIV Testing USA 13-24 (African American) 2006</p>	<p>Campaign to encourage HIV testing. Focused on principles of authenticity, respect, self-preservation and belonging</p>	<p>Community mobilisation (getting relevant community groups together to launch campaigns at the same time), Training of all participant organisations, social marketing youth-focused and youth helped develop the campaign</p>	<p>Evaluations compared engagement with organisations and testing. In two weeks after the campaign launch, calls to agencies increased 175%, completed HIV tests increased 153%. Testing and engagement returned back to baseline after completion of the campaign. 64% reported seeing the campaign.</p>
<p>“Snap Facts”⁵ Infection prevention UK ‘young people.’ 2017</p>	<p>Raise awareness of handwashing and drug resistance. It was produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.</p>	<p>Use of Snapchat filters and geofilters to get YP to take selfies and post them to Snapchat</p>	<p>Campaign cost ~\$1000 NZD, and was considered an inexpensive and effective way of reaching young people. The story was viewed 200 times, and geofilter reached 5,000.</p>
<p>“Not our Future” Anti-smoking NZ 12-24 2008</p>	<p>Raise awareness of harms of smoking, to make smoking “un-cool”.</p>	<p>TV ads, games online, the involvement of celebrities</p>	<p>YP had recognised campaign, and remembered the celebrities involved, and thought that YP would pay more attention with celebrity endorsement, YP understood the messages of the campaign, they thought it was relevant, credible and likeable. 11% of those who’d seen the campaign said they talked with others about it and 10% said they decided they wouldn’t smoke as a result of the campaign. 15-17 year-olds were most likely to think the campaign was directed at them, but it seemed to be most impactful on 12-14-year-olds. 82% of 12-14-year-olds said that ads put them off smoking.</p>
<p>“Break it off.” Anti-smoking Canada 19-29 2012</p>	<p>Help young people quit smoking or never start</p>	<p>Paid advertising on websites, banner ads on Microsoft, Yahoo and FB, ads on dating sites, links to smoker’s helpline, FB, Twitter, YouTube videos, blogs, quitting app</p>	<p>37,325 unique visitors, 107,600 page views, 3,937 app installations, app was used more than the website, using the app to track progress with quitting was helpful, sharing quit status on FB was helpful, 91% make a quit attempt, 77% satisfied with the campaign, only 21 visitors connected to Quitline. Key features of success: right people, partnerships, expertise in social media, adaptable and agile, socially innovative, enthusiasm.</p>

CONCLUSION

Young people have aspirations towards equal and healthy relationships and have learned some of the language to describe equality, but cannot articulate the depth of issues that underlie unhealthy relationships. Part of this is the reliance on peer networks and social status when it comes to forming and staying in relationships. Young people need help in understanding how coercion and control work, and how to identify early indicators of these behaviours – key to this is understanding that young people want to believe in romance and often link early coercive behaviour to romance and caring. The first signs of problematic coercive and controlling behaviour tend to come through technology in the form of control around social media or phone use. Young people in coercive relationships and violence relationships do have good experiences which keep them in their relationships and find it difficult to understand that some positives in the relationship do not out-weigh the emotional costs of coercive control. Relationship dynamics are heavily gendered. Ideas about idealised versions of masculinity and femininity shape peer norms around relationships and set up dynamics that facilitate men’s violence against women. Finally, it is important to understand that the trajectory of young people’s romantic relationships is shifting. Casual sex is playing an increasingly large role in the development of long term relationships. Emotional abuse can be present alongside sexual coercion in hook-ups and ‘friends with benefits’ relationships. This means it is important to avoid separating the sexual and romantic lives of young people.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

There are many opportunities to engage with young people around issues related to healthy relationships. Table 6 outlines these opportunities within a social-ecological model. A social-ecological model of young people and their relationships identifies how the issue manifests in all levels of society, from the individual to the family, peers, community and society levels. Each level provides opportunities for engagement and prevention.

TABLE 6: OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: A SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

Individual	Peers	Community	Society (Aotearoa)
Build self-efficacy in identifying coercive control and knowing what to do.	Build support skills in YP. Peers are often first sources of support.	Challenge normalisation of violence (e.g. strangulation) during sex.	Promote gender equality in relationships. Currently, there is the perception of gender equality, but YP still adheres to traditionally unequal roles.
Support YP’s ability to see issues in their own relationships. Currently, they can see issues with others’ relationships but not their own.	Build resilience and resistance to peer pressure. Peers are hugely influential in the relationships of young people.	Build an understanding of the severity of sexism, sexual harassment and sexual violence. E.g. Challenging the idea that rape jokes are “harmless”.	Challenge biological determinism that men are governed by testosterone and lack emotional depth.
	Currently, increased social status is a driver for engaging in sexual and romantic relationships. Challenge this perception or shift how social status is attained.	Support critical thinking and engagement with understanding the line between coercive control and ok behaviour	Challenge dominant norms related to masculinity.
	Social costs (e.g. reputation, friendships) can feel greater than the costs of unhealthy relationships.	Challenge notion (esp. prominent in some rural and working-class communities) that that rape or violence within relationships is inevitable.	

GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

Finally, this literature review has identified some key gaps in the literature related to young people and healthy relationships. Answering these questions can provide further insight into how to work with young people to foster healthy relationships.

RELATIONSHIPS

1. How starting relationships with casual sex shapes ongoing relationship dynamics.
 - a. How do young people transition from casual sex to being in a relationship?
 - b. Why do YP prefer starting relationships via casual sex?
2. Whether or not and how behaviours like spitting, hitting, and strangulation are becoming normalised in young people's sexual relationships.
3. What is their understanding of gendered patterns of behaviour at this time?
4. How do young people move between relationship statuses (e.g. "a thing" to "exclusive")?

TECHNOLOGY

5. We have a lot of info about how young people curate their profiles online, but not sure of link to coercive control – how this may be used to hide problematic behaviours. Does it influence perceptions of partners early-on?
6. Young people are moving toward using TikTok instead of Instagram. TikTok is a move away from heavily curated profiles. It is not clear how this will change the perceptions of young people and their relationships.
 - a. Are young people presenting their relationships in a way that is more 'raw'?
 - b. Are they showing the downsides of their relationships?
 - a. Are they talking more about issues like power and control in their relationships?
7. How online platforms (Instagram, TikTok) are used to flirt or indicate interest in sex

COERCIVE CONTROL

8. How do young people figure out the line between ok and coercive control?
9. How do young men resist coercion and controlling behaviour? What role modelling have they had so they maintain their social position while challenging misogyny.

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GLOSSARY OF LANGUAGE YOUNG PEOPLE USE IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

Ball and chain; used to refer to a female partner. The term is often used in humour between men, especially in relation to their perceptions of their freedom.

Being a bloke/ getting the bachelor out; having multiple sexual partners

Being an egg/being a dick – used to describe being disrespectful, jealous or behaving badly towards girlfriend/boyfriend²⁸. Not always taken seriously – can be used to minimise behaviour and deflect seriousness using humour.

Being the man/ the boss; used to describe being ‘in control’ in the relationship. Sometimes linked to sexist attitudes; sometimes used in humour.

Benching; when someone you have been flirting with or dating sets you aside while checking out other/better options.

Big dick energy; a person who has confidence without the need to be cocky, loud, or controlling. Someone with BDE doesn’t feel they need to brag or show off; they are secure and comfortable in themselves. Note: there is some evidence that the meaning of this may be shifting to mean the opposite.

Body count; a phrase used to refer to the number of people you have had sex with.

Boo/booboo; Term of endearment for a female partner

Brain; another term for ‘head’ or oral sex.

Breadcrumbing; when someone you are interested in keeps you hanging on often by sending flirty but non-committal messages without reciprocating romantic interest to the same degree.

Bros before hos = sometimes used in a light-hearted way to describe that the relationship between young men takes precedent over relationship with young women. However, also linked with ‘pussy-whipped’ as a man being controlled by women. Also linked to ho being about casual sex and a type of woman – that should never interfere with male friendships.

Catfishing; when you meet someone you are talking to online in person, and they are not who they say they are. Generally, they have been deceptive by using the photo of someone who is better looking to have more success with dating.

Cock-tease; a woman who flirts with a man with no intention of having sex with him.

Cuffing; when two people get together during the colder months for company and companionship (for the northern hemisphere winter and holiday season e.g. aiming to have a partner for Valentine's day).

Curving; when someone expresses romantic/sexual interest in you but you reject those advances. Not dissimilar from friend-zoning but less gendered.

Daddy; this term is used in several ways. It can refer to a partner who is sexually dominant or be used to describe someone (a man) who has a 'Dad bod' (body hair, muscles, facial hair, wealth). Comes from the popularization of dom/sub kinks from porn and also from the sugar paid dating arena (as in sugar baby or sugar Daddy).

Deep liking; when someone 'likes' post or photos on your social media that were posted a long time ago. The act of deep liking demonstrates that that person has been searching through all your content on social media platforms to find out more about you, often indicates their romantic interest in you.

Doom-scrolling; searching the web for the latest news about a current event or tragedy, about sad and stressful happening.

Drama; the exaggeration and publicization of personal events. Those who engage in drama spread gossip, claim that improbable events happened to them, exaggerate and inflate the seriousness of events happening to them, or intentionally incite tension between others. People who engage in drama often try to drag others into the mess and do so to make their own lives more interesting or to feel better about themselves. Drama is a label often attributed to female aggression and sometimes serves to belittle and undermine women's concerns or experiences⁶⁸

DTF; Down to fuck. An expression meaning that someone is interested in having sex.

DTR (define the relationship); a term used when someone wants to figure out the parameters and type of relationship.

Extra; over the top. This term is used to describe people who go the extra mile or who are over the top in their personality or dress, often a bad thing rather than a good thing.

Facebook/Instagram official (FBO); to announce or confirm your romantic relationship on social media, usually used in relation to romantic, monogamous relationships.

Finstagram; a fake or second Instagram profile used by young people. Typically there will be a main account which your friends have access to and a secondary account that parents etc. have access to with more conservative or personal content.

FOMO; short for 'fear of missing out'.

Friend zoned; when you are romantically interested in someone but they don't reciprocate and want to be 'just friends'.

Friends with benefits; friends that have an agreement to be sexual partners but not romantically involved.

Fuck boy; a man who is primarily interested in sex and not commitment. Often someone who is cocky and shallow, similar to womanizer, player etc.

Full meal; a follow-on term from 'snack' where someone is so attractive they aren't just a snack but a full meal.

Ghosted; when someone you have been talking or flirting with suddenly ceases contact thus breaking the relationship off without directly communicating that to you and leaving you hanging.

GOAT; short for 'greatest of all time'.

Haunting; when someone who has ghosted you reengages contact in a minor way without intending on rekindling the relationship, e.g. liking posts on Instagram.

Hook(ed)-up; to have casual sex with someone, however depending on age, can also mean just hanging out

I just snapped/lost it; Used as a reason for violence; minimise responsibility for actions

Incel; short for involuntary celibacy. This term is used to describe men who have no luck with dating despite wanting a partner. Usually, these men have bad attitudes towards women and blame them for their misery. They expect that they should have a partner by virtue of being a man. Incel subculture is a dark part of the internet associated with mass murderers such as Elliot Roger and Nikolas Cruz, people this subgroup idolize. They blame women's high standards for their lack of success when often it is their extremely sexist attitudes and volatile personalities.

Left on read; when someone you are dating or flirting with over social media 'sees' a message you have sent (as in the messaging app has a function where you can tell if someone has received and read a message you have sent) but doesn't reply.

Microcheating; a type of cheating that does not escalate to more serious acts of cheating such as having sex with someone else. Microcheating is low-level persistent dishonesty such as secretive flirting with others or the like.

Maleboo; term for male partner/boyfriend **Maleboo;** term for male partner/boyfriend²⁸

My man; term for male partner/boyfriend **My man;** term for male partner/boyfriend

My Missus/the missus; a term for female partner/girlfriend

Netflix and chill; code for sex.

Nudes; nude selfies/photographs of oneself.

Peacocking; when a man dresses up to gain attention/entice a partner and exude an ostentatious personality.

Quarantine and chill; like Netflix and chill but for the COVID-19 era.

Receipts: This term refers to the practice of posting screenshots of text or online conversations as “proof” of what happened in a “drama”. This is done to try and prove who was “right” and can bring parts of the relationship into the public sphere. Receipts can also be a helpful way to monitor and report unhealthy or abusive behaviour.

Score: Was able to hook up with someone. “I scored on Saturday night’.

Ship; to wish that two people would get together and become a couple. Often used about celebs.

Skank/slut/ho; used to describe women that are perceived to have ‘too much’ casual sex

Slide into DMs (direct messages); to send a flirtatious message to someone over social media with the hopes of engaging that person romantically or sexually.

Slow fade; when someone you are dating/flirting with gradually removes themselves from the relationship and decreases contact without explicitly articulating that the relationship is over. Similar to ghosting but not as sudden and thus seen as more respectful though not as respectful as being honest and cutting it off.

Smash your wife like Jake/giving or getting a hiding/getting the bash – used to describe physical violence towards a partner or having seen physical violence in the home. Sometimes used with humour.

Snack; someone who is very attractive, as in so attractive that you want to eat them up.

Soft boy; a man who is primarily interested in sex and will attempt to exude sensitivity and emotionality to get what he wants. Often seen as having superiority complexes, attempts to use philosophy and literature to do so, and deliberately distances himself from the fuck boy stereotype by constructing himself as a “good guy” but to the same ends, to get sex.

Subtweet; when someone shares a tweet/post/status update which addresses a particular person/event without specifically naming it so that people know who/what you’re talking about, but you maintain plausible deniability. Not exclusive to the social media platform Twitter.

Tap and gap; to have sex with someone and then not contact them again.

Tea or spilling tea; meaning to gossip or tell the truth. Similar to spill the beans.

Text bombing; when someone repeatedly calls or sends messages to another person, sometimes referred to as ‘blowing up their phone’.

Thirst trap; someone who posts sexy or otherwise enticing pictures on social media to attract others. Usually, these posts are seemingly about one thing, but the intention is to show off your body or attractiveness.

Thirsty; used to describe someone who is desperate for sex or to hook up.

Tinstagramming; when someone contacts you through your Instagram profile which they got through Tinder. This is a way of bypassing the swipe policy means that even though you swiped left and rejected their profile on Tinder, they use the information from your profile to find your Instagram and bother you thereby sending you direct messages.

Virtue signalling; describes when someone intentionally and publicly highlights their good deed or progressive mindset to gain social clout or other benefits. Often the virtue that they are signalling is not one that they truly internalize.

Volcel; voluntary celibacy. Not associated with the extreme subculture of incelism.

Zombieing; when someone who has ghosted you reengages contact and attempts to rekindle the relationship as if they have come back from the dead.

Zumping; being dumped over popular conferencing app Zoom.