

Media release

Gold meddle: Interfering family and friends are the top catalyst for Aussie break-ups

It's been said you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family. But what does that mean when it comes to your partner?

Friends and family might traditionally be viewed a safe sounding board, but new eharmony research has revealed that almost two thirds of Aussies (66%) see interference from loved ones as the most common cause of break ups. This makes it the number one relationship challenge in Australia.

The impact of meddling even surpasses dramatic events such as dealing with infertility (20%), cheating (17%) or a death in the family (15%).

Closely following these stresses come money problems, with a quarter of Aussies currently in relationships admitting that financing key projects, such as renovations or holidays, can be incredibly trying.

Reflecting on the overall findings, eharmony psychologist Sharon Draper says it's crucial we do not allow family and friends to become destructive influences in our romantic lives.

"Friends and family are often our go-to when talking through both good and bad times in relationships and they often have our best interests at heart. But sometimes their interference can be damaging.

"It may be that in some cases family and friends are right to warn you about a damaging or abusive relationship. But, for the most part, we need to guard against being swayed too dramatically of their opinions.

"That's why setting clear boundaries is important, particularly if being frequently hammered with unwanted advice from family and friends. If you ask their opinion about your relationship, that's one thing. But if you find they're always butting in without your permission, make it clear you are not interested in engaging on the topic and move on."

eharmony relationship expert Rachael Lloyd adds: *"We were really surprised to learn that interfering friends and family are the biggest cause of relationship break ups. But this being the case, perhaps some of these relationships weren't that stable in the first place.*

"Our data shows that couples who share high compatibility tend to have stronger relationships in the long run, as they share values and have better conflict resolution skills. That's why we match our singles accordingly. From renovating the house to navigating the advice of family and friends, the more you have in common with your partner the better your chances of getting the most out of shared experiences."

Key findings:

Table 1: Ten most testing experiences in relationships past or present among Australians (plus select additions)

1	Family members interfering in relationship	20%
2	Budgeting for future event (holiday, renovating, etc)	19%
3	Infidelity – physical cheating	17%

4	Illness	16%
5	Having (or trying to have) kids	15%
6	Death in the family	15%
7	Shared bank account management	12%
8	Travelling together	12%
9	Infidelity – emotional “micro” cheating (online flirting, emotional infidelity)	12%
10	Moving in together	12%
11	<i>The process of renovating/building</i>	10%
14	<i>Planning a wedding</i>	7%

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