

Feeling trapped in an unhappy relationship

Feeling trapped in your relationship, and/or wondering whether or not you should get out of it, is probably more common than you think. When you face a problem, it is a very normal response to want to find a solution to it. However, solving relationship issues can be very draining and seem particularly difficult.

It is important to remember that you have four options:

1. Stay – and change what can be changed

If you choose to stay, it is important that you think through exactly what you can do to make things better. You can only control your own actions, not your partner's. It is important to remember this.

What I can change if I stay:

2. Stay – and accept what cannot be changed

If you choose to stay and your relationship remains difficult despite every possible action on your part to improve it, consider what cannot be changed and whether or not these are things that you can learn to accept (e.g. partner working long hours).

What I need to accept if I want to stay:

3. Stay – and give up, do things that make it worse

This option is what most people do, but it is the option that causes the most suffering and pain. People who choose this option tend to worry, obsess, complain to others, feel depressed and/or try (unsuccessfully) to make themselves feel better, by doing destructive things like drowning their sorrows. **This is not a good option.**

4. Leave

Although it is impossible to predict the future, if things are really bad and you have tried options 1 and 2 comprehensively, consider how your overall quality of life would be if you were to leave the relationship. Doing so certainly is not likely to be easy in the short term, but it is important to think of the long term, and remember that you are not trapped. Writing out the pros and cons of leaving may be a good place to start.

Consider talking these options through with your partner. If you feel unable to do so, speak to a trusted friend or your GP about them.

Learning techniques in the ifarmwell modules may also help.

