

News release - 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014

## Relate Cambridge's top tips for separated parents this Mother's Day

Special days throughout the year can be tough time for separated families, with parents and children all too often feeling pulled in different directions over celebrations. That's why Relate Cambridge has compiled tips for both mums and dads to help make the day special for everyone.

Relate Cambridge's counsellor Elaine Taylor said: "Mother's Day, like Christmas and school holidays, can be a difficult occasion for separated parents. Different members of the family may want to see the kids at various times, and usual routines could be disrupted. But, with the right planning, it's still possible for everyone to enjoy the day and make it special.

"Ultimately, separated mums and dads will always be connected to each other because they will always share the children. Being on workable terms with an ex can make times like Mother's Day much easier. In fact, special occasions can even be a good start in building a decent, communicative relationship between ex partners."

Relate Cambridge's top tips for mums:

- **Be honest.** If you can, try to be honest with your ex partner about what you'd like to do on Mother's Day. If you want to change arrangements so that you have the children when you wouldn't usually, make sure you talk openly to your ex and give plenty of notice.
- **Remember it's just one day.** This is important, especially if you've recently separated. Your children are likely to feel a bit strange as to how to approach Mother's Day, so try not to put too much pressure on it.
- **Plan something for yourself.** Regardless of whether you have the kids or not, plan a little treat for yourself on or around Mother's Day. Every mum deserves a reward for all your hard work – whether it's a spa day with your own mum or just a cheeky bar of chocolate.

Relate Cambridge's top tips for dads:

- **Give a little.** If you can, try to talk to your ex partner about what she'd like to do on Mother's Day. Try to be flexible where you can on who has the children that day – a little gesture like swapping your days can go a long way.
- **Help the kids out.** Even if your relationship with your ex is difficult, she will always be your kids' mum, and it can really help children to know that you understand their relationship with both parents is important. Help them write cards or buy presents if possible.
- **Plan something for yourself.** It can be tough to imagine the children having a special time with your ex, especially if the break up is recent. Instead of dwelling on that, have something in mind to look forward to yourself.

Parents who are dealing with separation can visit [www.relate.org.uk/separation](http://www.relate.org.uk/separation) for guidance on managing the practical and emotional realities of separation. The website also offers parents who are worried about their relationships with their teenagers the chance to chat to a Relate counsellor online for free.

People can also call Relate Cambridge to find out more about how we support children and families as well as further information on our services, such as face-to-face counselling, our work in schools, courses for parents and children and family counselling.

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