

Thinking about a summer fling? Read this article first

January 3 2022, by Raquel Peel



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Summer is a time we associate with love. The longer days and warmer weather can [lead](#) to people feeling happier, more relaxed and in the mood for romance. This year in particular, Australians are longing for

human connection with the ease of state border restrictions and lockdowns.

Before you head to the bar or the beach or swipe right, here are some things to think about to make the most of summer relationships.

Summer romances

Relationships research tell us the initial stages of a romance are highly influenced [by context and social norms](#).

This means when expressing romantic interest, we tend to go with what makes us feel confident and comfortable. For some, it might mean seeking out someone in a night club, for others it is online dating.

We tend to act differently depending on where we are and who we are with. This explains why you might be willing to engage in a casual romance when holidaying abroad, although this is not something you would normally do at home.

Summer romances or "[holiday flings](#)" [often occur](#) outside of the routine of everyday life, where normal behavior is not necessarily followed. Research has [found people](#) feel less inhibited on holidays and willing to try new things, including embarking on a "hot romance" with someone they just met or experimenting with sexuality.

Similar to casual relationships such as one-night stands and "friends with benefits," summer romances tend to be shorter and more intense. They often have an [accelerated timeline](#), where people will seek to experience important [relationship](#) milestones, such as disclosing personal information and having physical intimacy, in a shorter period of time.

There is also more chance of people engaging in risky behaviors, and the

expectation that sex (or increased sexual activity) is an inevitable part of the interaction.

But summer romances can also allow us to date without commitment. This is an appealing option if you are looking to minimize the chances of rejection or getting hurt. It is also appealing for those of us who like to [flirt for fun](#).

As there is more than one way to experience romance during the holidays, it is important people know what they are looking for and understand their expectations upfront.

Great expectations

Regardless of whether casual romances can turn into committed relationships, the experience is real and can be treasured as a moment to remember and learn from. For instance, [research](#) suggests people might use these experiences as a way to "test drive" partners that might be suitable for a long-term relationship.

Research [also suggests](#) women place more importance on the friendship aspects of casual relationships, while men are attracted to casual relationships as a means to have sex without commitment. So, for singles looking for a serious commitment, a casual summer [romance](#) might be emotionally risky. I would recommend communicating this [expectation](#) with your partner upfront to manage the risk of disappointment.

We also know there is a natural increase in feelings of stress, anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts during the [holiday season](#), [associated](#) with social demands and unmet expectations. So, if you are already feeling emotionally vulnerable, this might not be the best time to embark in new romantic experiences without acknowledging the risk of having your heart broken.

You must talk about sex

Regardless of whether you're on holiday or not, it's important for partners to talk about their expectations [around casual sex](#), so it is safe and consensual. This might include telling your partner if you're also seeing other people, or being upfront about your sexual history and last sexual health check.

Studies [report](#) that when engaging in casual sex, partners communicate less about sexually transmitted infections compared to partners in committed relationships. It is also important to be honest if you are just looking to have fun and not considering a serious commitment.

Altogether, the holiday season is a time filled with opportunities to experiment with new romantic adventures or experience magical moments with loved ones. But, managing expectations in advance is paramount to experiencing healthy intimate encounters.

This means people should be able to take responsibility for their choices with insight into what they want and need—and most importantly—can emotionally handle at the time.

What about couples?

Holiday romances are not only for singles. It can also be a time to strengthen existing relationships.

The holiday period is also the perfect time to establish relationship rites of passage, such as getting engaged, with Christmas and New Years being a very popular time to pop the question.

For more established relationships, it is also a chance to get out of

everyday routines and repair relationships that might have fallen into a bit of a rut during the year.

When managing work and family commitments, it is easy to feel like you might not have enough time to talk to your partner about your needs or your desire to try new things.

A good place to start is by communicating with your [partner](#) about your expectations before a holiday. Are you wanting to recreate a special sentimental memory from a past holiday or looking to create new traditions and experiences?

This [time](#) of the year can be a chance for people to embark on romantic adventures, create new meanings for the holidays, and reinvent themselves. To make the most of these experiences, [open and honest](#) communication is key.

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