



## How to make office romances work

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Found love at work? Here's how to navigate the ins and outs of office relationships.

Whether it's falling in love with someone in the office or on the factory floor, or finding that special spark with a boss, a significant number of Australians are in a relationship with a workmate.

Relationships Australia estimates about 40 per cent of men and women aged 35 to 50 meet their partners at work.

Perhaps that's not surprising when we spend a large part of our waking week at work.

“We have common interests with people in the same industry or profession, and that builds familiarity and rapport,” says HR expert Karen Gately, founder of Corporate Dojo.

“Social events through work can create connections too.”

## The rules of love at work

Keeping things professional and avoiding pillow talk is important, particularly if the relationship is with your boss.

“Turning into a love-struck mess or having a lover’s quarrel in the middle of the office won’t help your professional reputation,” warns Karen.

“Many employers have a ‘no dating the boss’ policy and if a relationship does form, one person may have to change jobs.

“An employer may argue unreasonable risk to their business if people are in a reporting relationship and a personal relationship.”

Also be aware some colleagues may be unhappy at the prospect of you dating the boss.

“If you’re dating the boss and get a promotion, there may be concerns of favouritism, unfair advantage and you having access to extra information because of the relationship,” says Karen.

## Top tips for office romances

### **Be open and honest**

“If there is a reporting relationship – employee and boss – I think there has to be full disclosure. Approach the right people, let them know,” advises Karen.

“An employer is less likely to hold concerns if you are honest and if you have thought through any potential concerns and how they can be mitigated.”

## **Leave intimacy at home**

Avoid PDAs at work. Workmates shouldn't be reminded that you're dating.

## **Set clear boundaries**

Both people need to recognise there will be some things, like upcoming changes in an organisation, that can't be talked about.

"I know of one couple where one person in the relationship was in a position to know about upcoming changes," says Karen.

"There has to be an understanding of what you can and can't share to uphold professional obligations."

## **If you split up ...**

If the relationship goes wrong, be mature.

And if you can't be productive and effective because an ex-relationship makes that difficult, think about moving on.