

# CAPE BRETON POST

## Cape Bretoners single and not ready to mingle

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Debbie Williams, 55, of Sydney, left, and Byron McCallum, 46, of Sydney, employees of the Sydney Call Centre, and Danielle MacLaren, 33, of Whitney Pier, make hearts with their fingers in celebration of loving life being single, despite approaching Valentine's Day. Sharon Montgomery-Dupe/Cape Breton Post

SYDNEY, N.S. — Feeling sorry for those single and not ready to relationship mingle?

Dr. Simon Sherry of CRUX Psychology in Halifax says any pity would be misplaced.

“There is a lot of stereotyping around Valentine’s Day that suggests that single people are lonely, are failing to find the connection they need within the world.”

Sherry, also a professor in the department of psychology and neuroscience at Dalhousie University, said he challenges this stereotype of single people.

“The stereotype of single people is that they are sad, lonely and disconnected but when you get down to the level of research it seems being single is associated with an increased level of belonging and connection.”



There is much that can be said in praise of being single, says Dr. Simon Sherry, a clinical psychologist at CRUX Psychology and a professor in the department of psychology and neuroscience at Dalhousie University.

Sherry said there’s much that can be said in praise of being single, including the fact single individuals are very actively involved in their community compared to those who are partnered.

"They are more likely to give help than receive help," he said. "They are people who tend to have a more deeply involved and varied social network. Single people actually have more interaction with friends, family, neighbours, co-workers, etc."

In fact, Sherry said it seems the benefits of a marital relationship are on the decline and the benefits of being single are on an upward trend.

When you look at people who are partnered or married, Sherry says there seems to be a drift towards a narrower and smaller social network that increases over time.

"I think there is a natural disconnection by partnered people — of disconnecting from friends — that you can just be content with your own partner."

## **SINGLE IN CAPE BRETON**

Danielle MacLaren, 33, of Whitney Pier has been single for about a year now.

"I enjoy the freedom, just to be able to go out whenever you want and wherever you want," she said. "To not be confined if the other one doesn't feel like going out. It's just to have the freedom to do what you want."

When Valentine's Day arrives it doesn't affect her, her thoughts remain the same.

"No I don't feel bad at all, it's just another day," she added

Byron McCallum, 46, of Sydney, is also single.

"I've been single a while, a long while," he said.

McCallum said he enjoys being single as you get to do things your own way.

"You can do whatever you want to, whenever you want to," he said, agreeing if he wants companionship then he can arrange a date.



Sheila McCormick, manager of Emerald Isle Gifts, Welton Street, in Sydney, sets up a display of popular gifts people seek not only for Valentine's Day but for Galantine's Day, which is centred on acquaintances and single people celebrating their friendships on Feb. 13. Galantine's Day is described as becoming as popular as Valentine's Day itself in terms of gift-giving. Sharon Montgomery-Dupe/Cape Breton Post

## **VALENTINE'S DAY VULNERABILITY**

Meanwhile, Sherry said Valentine's Day can also be a period of vulnerability for a breakup if you already have a weak relationship.

"During Valentine's, we often make a social comparison to the ideals of romance and from that perspective, Valentine's Day can be a time where you ponder where your relationship is at," he said. "So if you already have a weak relationship — look out — there's plenty of evidence that couples tend to break up in and around Valentine's Day. If your relationship was already healthy and rock-solid, you have nothing to worry about but for weaker relationships, Valentine's Day looks to be a catalyst for breakup often because people tend to take stock of expectations in and around it."

Debbie Williams, 55, of Sydney, says she has been single 'a very long time.'

"I do enjoy being single," she said, adding when with partners in the past she was always told what to do and how to do it. "Now I'm my own person."

Originally from Yarmouth, she hasn't lived in Sydney for a long time, so she doesn't have a lot of friends yet but enjoys lots of activities on her own, including going to movies.

*Sharon-Montgomery-Dupe is a health and breaking news reporter at the Cape Breton Post.*