

'Location Sharing Should Be a Convenience, Not Proof of Innocence': Couples Therapist Warns of Relationship Surveillance

Texas couples therapist Ally Wang, LPC-S, says Find My, Life360 and Snap Map can offer convenience, but checking may expose deeper trust and control issues.

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-- Your spouse is 20 minutes late. Do you text them, or immediately open Find My?

Location sharing has become an ordinary part of modern relationships. Couples use Find My, Life360, Snap Map and other apps to coordinate schedules, check whether someone arrived safely and stay connected throughout the day.



When checking a partner's location becomes a source of anxiety instead of convenience, it may be worth taking a closer look at what's happening beneath the surface.

But Ally Wang, LPC-S, a couples therapist at MindLift Alliance, says a tool designed for convenience can take on a very different role when partners begin using a location dot as evidence of honesty.

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Tracking someone's dot on a map isn't going to repair broken trust, sometimes it simply delays the conversation the couple actually needs to have.”

*Xiaoli "Ally" Wang, LPC-S,
Founder and Clinical Director*

"Location sharing should be a convenience, not proof of innocence," Wang said. "If you need a location dot to believe your partner, the problem isn't the location. It's the trust."

Wang says location sharing frequently comes up in her work with couples dealing with trust and communication problems. It does not necessarily begin negatively. A couple may turn it on for safety, travel, convenience or

reassurance during a difficult period.

The problem can emerge when sharing stops feeling optional.

"It usually starts from a good place: safety, convenience, staying connected," Wang said. "But once it becomes an expectation, asking to turn it off can suddenly feel suspicious, even when nothing is wrong."

When "Are You Safe?" Becomes "Where Were You?"

Wang says the important question is not whether location sharing itself is healthy or unhealthy. The more revealing question is why someone is checking.

Checking whether a spouse arrived safely after a late-night drive is very different from repeatedly monitoring where a partner is, how long they stayed somewhere or why they made an unexpected stop.

"There's a difference between checking whether your spouse got home safely and auditing where they spent every 15 minutes of their day," Wang said. And technology can create an illusion of certainty.

A dot on a map can tell someone where a phone appears to be. It cannot explain why their partner is there, what they are thinking or whether the relationship is secure.

"Tracking someone's dot on a map isn't going to repair broken trust," Wang said. "Sometimes it simply delays the conversation the couple actually needs to have."

5 Signs Location Sharing May Be Crossing a Relationship Boundary

According to Wang, couples may want to reconsider how they are using location sharing when:

- One partner checks the other's location repeatedly without a practical reason.



Healthy relationships leave room for honest conversations about trust, boundaries, and the ways technology fits into a couple's life.



Building trust in a relationship means creating space for honest conversations, mutual boundaries, and comfort with not always knowing where your partner is.

- A delayed, unavailable or turned-off location immediately creates anxiety or suspicion.
- One partner regularly questions the other about unexpected stops or how long they stayed somewhere.
- Turning location sharing off leads to accusations, arguments or demands for an explanation.
- One partner no longer feels comfortable saying, "I don't want to share my location."

None of these behaviors alone proves that a relationship is unhealthy, Wang cautions. Instead, they can be signals that a couple should talk about the underlying need being met by tracking.

"Ask yourself: Am I checking because I need information, or am I checking because I need reassurance?" Wang said. "Those are two very different things."

The Question Couples Rarely Ask: Can I Say No?

Wang says healthy location sharing should involve an agreement rather than an assumption.

A couple might decide that sharing locations makes everyday life easier. Another couple might decide they prefer to text each other when they arrive somewhere. Neither choice automatically indicates how healthy the relationship is.

What matters is whether both people have a genuine choice.

"Location sharing should be voluntary and, frankly, pretty boring," Wang said. "When turning it off creates an interrogation, the technology may be revealing a trust problem rather than solving one."

Couples should also revisit the agreement periodically. Location sharing turned on during travel, a difficult period, a new relationship or a particular safety concern does not necessarily need to become permanent.

"I Don't Trust You" Cannot Be Solved by an App

Wang encourages couples who disagree about location sharing to identify the actual need underneath the disagreement.

"I want to know you arrived safely" may require a simple logistical solution.

"I become anxious when I don't know where you are" requires a different conversation.

"I don't believe you when you tell me where you've been" points to a deeper trust issue.

"The question I ask couples isn't, 'Is location sharing good or bad?'" Wang said. "It's, 'What need is this actually meeting, and could you meet that need by talking to each other instead?'"

For couples experiencing repeated arguments about tracking, Wang recommends discussing the pattern directly rather than continuing to negotiate individual app settings.

A New Relationship Question for the Smartphone Era

Technology has given couples access to information that previous generations simply did not have.

The question now is not only whether couples can know where their partners are at virtually every moment.

It is whether they need to.

"Trust isn't knowing where your partner is every minute," Wang said. "Trust is being able to tolerate the moments when you don't."

Couples curious about where their own relationship stands can start with MindLift's relationship assessment, a short, private quiz that offers a quick read before deciding whether a conversation with a therapist makes sense. This same conversation is also available as a short video on MindLift Alliance's YouTube channel.

About Ally Wang and MindLift Alliance

Ally Wang, LPC-S, is a Texas couples therapist and the founder, president and clinical director of MindLift Alliance Counseling, Assessment & Education Services. She works with couples navigating communication difficulties, trust repair and relationship conflict. MindLift Alliance provides individual, couples, teen, family and group counseling, including bilingual English/Mandarin services, with in-person services in McKinney and telehealth available across Texas. The practice accepts most major insurance plans.

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