

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS PROGRAM



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Session 1

Self-Care

A discussion on areas of **strength** and **development** in your relationship.

- An important foundation of being your best possible self in a relationship.
- Negative judgment & fostered anger can lead to self-destructive behaviours.
- Self-kindness fosters health and positive changes.

Session 2: Fair Fighting Rules

Rule 1: Ask “Why am I Upset”?

Is it a value or belief that is important to me? If something is bothering you, be specific about what it is and how it is bothering you.

Rule 2: Discuss Only One Issue

Bringing up other issues like the past loses focus on the present issue, increases conflict, and the argument will never end.

Rule 3: No Degrading Language

Consider your words – when angry, a person may swear, insult, or say things that they know will hurt and anger the other person. This only makes an argument more heated.

Rule 4: Express feelings using words & take responsibility.

Own your feelings and explain how you feel.

Use the format:

I feel ____ when ____.

Rule 5: Take Turns

Make sure everyone gets a chance to talk – brainstorm some strategies such as setting a timer or confirming understanding and asking consent before the other shares.

Rule 6: Avoid Stonewalling

Stonewalling is a weapon of blocking, ignoring, or shutting some one out as it prevents communication and intimacy by pushing people out - it is not taking a time out.

Session 2: Fair Fighting Rules continued

Rule 7: No Yelling

Stay calm - if you raise your voice or yell, chances are the other person will too. Neither is listening and rather than constructive, we become destructive.

Rule 8: Take a Timeout

If you feel yourself getting elevated or flooded with intense emotions, ask for a break. Be sure to set the duration of the break and what you will be doing.

Rule 9: Try to Reach a Compromise

Focus on gaining understanding, not winning the argument. Have a clear goal for the conversation. Keep working on the conflict using these tools.

Session 3

Elements of a Respectful Relationship

- Honesty & Respect
- Sharing Responsibilities
- Security
- Sharing Assets
- Support
- Fun
- Intimacy
- Good communication
- Patience
- Physical & Emotional Safety
- Reliability
- Understanding
- Shared Interests & Goals
- Room to be an Individual
- Responsibility
- Loyalty
- Trust

Session 4

The Anatomy of Trust: BRAVING

- Boundaries** - be clear about boundaries & respect them.
- Reliability** - trust that your partner will do what they say they will.
- Accountability** - apologize and make amends for mistakes.
- The Vault** - keeping what is shared secret & confidential.
- Integrity** - choose courage over comfort, choose what is right over what is fun, fast and easy, & practicing your values, not just professing them.
- Non-Judgement** - reciprocal non-judgement on mistakes & actions.
- Generosity** - assume the most generous intentions behind words & actions.

Session 4: Love Languages continued

Words of Affirmation

verbal and digital communication with acknowledgments of affection.

Quality Time

spending time together with active listening, eye contact, and full presence.

Acts of Service

going out of the way to make your life easier by doing chores or other acts.

Gifts

receiving items is not about the monetary value but the symbolic thought behind the item.

Physical Touch

physical signs of affection & intimacy including kissing, holding hands, or cuddling.

Session 5

Four Horsemen:

1. **Criticism** - verbal attacks on the other's personality and character.
2. **Defensiveness** - not accepting responsibility for actions or harms.
3. **Contempt** - highly critical, disgust towards the other, very demeaning.
4. **Stonewalling** - one disengages emotionally/physically from conflict.

Four Communication Skills:

1. **Paraphrasing** - repeat back to the speaker what we have heard.
2. **Behaviour Description** - description of observable behaviour that is free of assumptions & discuss meaning.
3. **Empathy** - invite clarity on the message by stating own interpretation.
4. **Description of Feelings** - use "I feel ___ when ___" statements.

Session 6

Non-Violent Communication

Ask the following questions:

1. What am I feeling?
2. What are my unmet needs?

Communication Formula:

When describe action,
I feel share feeling,
because I need state need
Would you consider make request ?

4 “Ears” of Communication

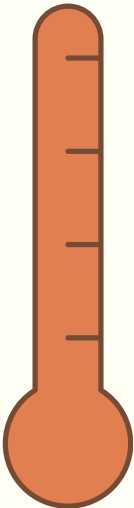
Giraffe Ears

- Giraffe Ears In - sense our own feelings and needs.
- Giraffe Ears Out - sense the feelings and needs of the other person.

Jackal Ears

- Jackal Ears In - judges and criticizes oneself.
- Jackal Ears Out - judges and blaming the other person, attacking.

Session 7



Get familiar with your physical symptoms, thoughts, and behaviours at varying levels of the anger thermometer.

A discussion on **stress management** including healthy and unhealthy ways of **coping**.

Questions or Concerns?

Do not hesitate to connect with us regarding our services.

Session 8

Ways of Communicating:

Passive - prioritizes the needs, wants, and feelings of others, at their own expense.

Assertive - communication emphasizes the importance of both peoples' needs.

Aggressive - person expresses that only their own needs, wants, & feelings matter.

A discussion on how to set and enforce **boundaries** (types: physical, emotional & intellectual)

Session 9

Bids: small attempts at connection with our partner in hopes for positive engagement from our partner. Three ways to respond:

Turning toward: showing interest.

Turning away: ignoring or dismissing.

Turning against: harsh, negative response.