

Communicating With Your Partner

Effective communication happens when both partners can clearly and simply describe their feelings, thoughts and wishes to each other, listen to each other, and feel understood by the other.

Effective communication does not happen when one partner gets their own way by the other either resentfully complying, or agreeing to avoid conflict.

Tips for communicating with your partner

- Focus on describing your feelings, thoughts and wishes clearly and simply to your partner rather than making a case for getting your way or blaming/shaming them.
- Try to observe what your partner is feeling as well as what they are saying. Look for clues in their facial expression/s, body language, and tone of voice, as well as what they are saying
- Acknowledging your partner's thoughts, feelings and wishes will help them to feel heard. It need not mean that you agree with what your partner is saying, but does demonstrate to them that they are important enough to you to want to hear what they are saying and feeling.
- Look at your partner when they are speaking to you.
- When explaining your thoughts, feelings and wishes try to use the word "I" rather than the word "you". People tend to hear the word "you" as an accusation. For example, "*You are not listening to me*" can feel like an accusation compared to "*I don't feel heard*" where the speaker owns what they are feeling rather than what their partner is or isn't doing.
- Try to explain your feelings, thoughts and wishes as simply as possible, you can ask your partner if they need more detail.
- Ask questions to learn and understand more about what your partner is saying and feeling rather than assuming you know.
- Notice your partner's reaction as feedback to what you are saying. Sometimes what you intended to communicate is not what your partner has heard. You need to check this out with them.
- Ask your partner for feedback on what helps them to feel heard and appreciated by you, and vice versa.

- If you are finding a conversation difficult or upsetting let your partner know

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