

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is a part of life. You and your partner will disagree about lots of things.

The important thing is *HOW* you and your partner respond to the conflict. What are some of the common ways of dealing with conflict?

- Avoid conflict
- Deny conflict exists (wait until it goes away)
- Change the subject
- React emotionally (become aggressive, abusive, hysterical)
- Find someone to blame
- Make excuses
- Delegate the situation to someone else

If you keep in mind that a healthy relationship needs a large dose of positive behaviours, then managing conflict by any of the above methods is likely to decrease relationship satisfaction. This is why it is important to know how to break the cycle of negativity when it starts.

Some tips for managing conflict include:

- Do not criticise
- Do not raise topics of conflict in front of other people

Here is a summary sheet about handling conflict that you can paste on your fridge and use as a guide when there is conflict in the house.

SOME IDEAS ON MANAGING CONFLICT CALMLY

1. Agree on the rules ahead of time.
2. Set aside a short time (e.g. 15 minutes) to discuss the topic
3. Start the discussion when you both feel calm
4. Call a time out if emotions begin to escalate. Take time out OR talk calmly to yourself.
 - a. Set a time to return to the discussion.
5. When discussing, let only one person talk at a time.
6. Take turns being speaker and listener as you each present your point of view.

Speaker: State how you see the problem

Focus on the problem, not the person

Use I-statements

Listener: Listen and avoid judging what the speaker says

Ask questions to clarify and further your understanding

Summarise the issues as you understand them

1. Each person states their point of view
2. When both partners have stated their points of view, come to an agreement on what the problems are
3. Brainstorm solutions
4. State which solutions each of you would be willing to take
5. Agree on one solution that fits both your needs
6. Agree on an action plan
7. Follow through and take action