



How to manage conflict

Activity 1 Being specific about frustrations

Agree with your partner to set time aside where you jointly practice using the following sentence starters.

I feel angry when you (let your partner know the specific behaviour).

I get angry because what I imagine is....(let you partner know how you interpret their behaviour)

I would prefer you to do... instead (let your partner know about your desired behaviour).

Activity 2 Restructuring anger and frustration – Making a request for change

- 1. Describe the situation that you find frustrating. Be neutral in your description. *What frustrates me is...***
- 2. Describe the impact of this situation on you. *When this happens I feel...***
- 3. Refer the situation to an earlier experience (not related to your partner) that was wounding for you. *I am reminded of the time when...***
- 4. Identify your own behaviour in response to your frustration. *When I feel like this I do...***
- 5. Describe your underlying fears. *I do this because to hide my fear that...***
- 6. State your desired outcome for change. *In future would like you to...***

Activity 2 Restructuring anger and frustration – Making a request for change

7. In order to achieve your desired outcome, give your partner 3 options to achieve it. Each option has to be achievable.

For example: You want your partner to arrive on time for dinner.

Option 1: Call me to let me know that you will be late if you cannot manage to be on time.

Option 2: Surprise me and come home earlier once in a while.

Option 3: If you continue to be late, make the time to listen to my frustration about your lateness without getting defensive.

Activity 3 Draw up your own conflict resolution contract

Write down a contract that you can refer to when you are discussing where conflict needs to be resolved. Both of you have to agree on each item in the contract. E.g.

1. We don't use insulting language.
2. We don't shout at each other.
3. We don't insult each other's families.

