How to express yourself

Activity 1 Noticing your own feelings

a) Note down a list of all the feelings that you can think of. Notice how hard it is to think of many feelings.

b) Group the list that you have compiled into 'positive' and 'negative' feelings.

c) Are there feelings that you associate with being scary and better kept to yourself? Do you express your feelings to your partner – positive and negative? Do you say 'I feel...' today? If not, practice letting your partner know what you feel on a more regular basis.

Activity 2 Expressing 'negative' feelings

For most people it is hard to express 'negative' feelings. Notice your response to a problem you want to bring up with your partner. You may notice that you are starting to feel hot or cold in your body. You can try breathing exercises to calm yourself down. Notice whether you associate this feeling with an experience from the past. Check with yourself whether there is enough evidence to support your fear that you partner might react badly to you bringing up this negative feeling. Are they really going to leave you if you express this feeling?

Activity 3 Expressing a frustration

If you experience a frustration with your partner don't let too much time pass before letting your partner know that you are troubled.

Agree on a time with your partner where you have a conversation about the issue that is troubling you. In preparation for the meeting write down what frustrates you by using 'I feel…' statements, e.g.

I feel… overwhelmed when you ask me to do…

I feel… dismissed when you shrug your shoulders and ignore my request for…

I feel … put down when you refer to me as …