Relationship Conflict Resolution

**Focus on the Problem, not the person**

When a disagreement turns to personal insults, raised voices, or mocking tones, the conversation is no longer productive. Be careful to focus on the problem without placing blame on your partner or yourself. If a dis agreement becomes person, you should pause the conversation

**Know when to take a Time-Out**

When you and your partner are becoming argumentative, insulting, or aggressive, it’s a good idea to take a time-out. Have a plan in place so you and your partner can call for a break when needed. Spend some time doing something (healthy) alone that you find relaxing. Be clear with each other that you are taking a time out, not just walking away. When you’ve both calmed down, you and your partner can return to solving the problem. Be sure that you do return- it isn’t a good idea to leave issues unaddressed.

**Use Reflective Listening**

Oftentimes during arguments, we focus on getting our own point across rather than listening to our partner. Before responding to your partner, restate what they have said to you in your own words. Continue this process until your partner agrees that you understand the important points they have stated. Next, share your side. Your partner should reflect back your ideas in their own words until they too understand all the important points. Using this technique will help both individuals to feel listened to and understand, even if you disagree on a topic.

**Work toward a resolution**

Disagreement is a normal part of a relationship. If it becomes clear that you and your partner will not agree, focus on a resolution instead. Find a compromise that benefits both individuals. Ask yourself if this disagreement really matters to your relationship and let yourself move on if it is not that important.

**Using “I” Statements**

This technique allows you to take the blame out of discussions when trying to share your experience with your partner. Focus on your own experience of a situation and share it with your partner, acknowledging that their experience may be different from yours. Take blame out of your statements by saying “I” at the start of each sentence.

Identify the trigger- “When I saw/heard…”

Identify the thoughts- “I think/thought…”

Identify the feelings- “I feel/felt…and…”

Identify behavior- “So then I did this/said this…”

Identify the wish- “For things to be different I will try… and you could try…”