

# COMMUNICATION FOR COUPLES

## **LISTEN FIRST, ANSWER LATER**

Often times during arguments, you may think of what you want to say next and forget to listen.

Be quiet while your partner speaks

Follow up by summarizing what they said before you answer  
"So what I'm hearing is that you're angry that I made a huge purchase without talking to you first."

## **ADJUST YOUR WORDS**

- Focus on how it feels to you
  - "It feels like I don't have any help lately and I feel alone"
- Avoid using words like NEVER or ALWAYS
  - "you ALWAYS do this/you NEVER do this"
- Avoid using "you" and focus on the "me/I"
  - "You hurt my feelings" vs "my feelings are hurt right now"
- Acknowledge their point of view before you speak

## **HOW DOES MY PARTNER FEEL?**

While you are listening to your partner, look for the emotions they are feeling. It may feel like they are angry, but dig into their words to see if they are feeling hurt, betrayed or sad.

## **TONE IS EVERYTHING**

If you find yourself being triggered by your partner's tone, remain even and tell them, "I'm trying to listen to you but all I can hear is an angry tone. Can we try this conversation again in a few minutes when we calm down?"

## **HOLD HANDS**

Before you start a serious or controversial conversation, ask if it would be okay to hold your partners hand while you talk

## **OWN YOUR PART**

If it is obvious your partner is upset but you are not sure how to react, or what to do about it, ask them!

"How can I be a better partner to you?"

## **DO NOT BRING UP THE PAST**

Trust us, that's some bad juju. Agree to not do this while you are not in an argument. If during an argument, your partner tries to bring up a past incident, calmly redirect them. "I'd like to focus on the current issue, which is xxx. Can we talk about the present?"