

IDENTIFY AND VALIDATE YOUR PARTNER'S FEELINGS AND POINTS OF VIEW

GOALS OF THE EXERCISE

1. To help the couple listen to and stop blaming one another.
2. To clarify miscommunications and misunderstandings.

TYPES OF PROBLEMS THIS EXERCISE MAY BE MOST USEFUL FOR

- All

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF AFTER THE EXERCISE FOR PROCESSING

1. How did it feel for you to be listened to and validated?
2. How did it feel to listen and validate?
3. What surprised you in doing this exercise?

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Sometimes the simplest solution is to just stop and listen to what your partner is saying and imagine how he or she could be feeling that way or seeing things from their perspective.

Do this exercise in situations where your partner is complaining about you or something you did.

1. Don't try to defend yourself, correct your partner's perceptions/facts or talk them out of their feelings.
2. Just put yourself in your partner's position and try to hear how they understand, interpret, and feel about the situation.
3. Imagine how you would feel or act if you were seeing and felt the same way.
4. If what your partner is saying sounds crazy or unreasonable, consider the possibility that you are missing something, and listen and ask questions until it makes sense.
5. Validate your partner's feelings by giving a short summary of what you just hear.
6. Express your understanding and let your partner know how difficult it must be, given how they feel about the situation.

Record your experiences for each situation:

1. What was your partner's complaint?

2. What did you learn by listening?

3. How did changing your behavior affect the interaction?

Remember to bring completed worksheet to your next appointment.