

Common Couples' Communication Dynamics

Identify yourself among the following:

Verbal Defenses

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectualization or debate | <input type="checkbox"/> Lecturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nagging | <input type="checkbox"/> Interrupting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criticism, blaming | <input type="checkbox"/> Yelling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barrage of emotions | <input type="checkbox"/> Belittling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lying | <input type="checkbox"/> Whining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pleading | <input type="checkbox"/> Threats of divorce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name-calling, verbal abuse* | <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Threats or use of physical violence* | <input type="checkbox"/> Threats of self-harm* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sarcasm, refusal to take a problem seriously | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use of blanket statements ("You always..." "You never...") | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent tangents or excessive details | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gossip/chatter that avoids meaningful contact with partner | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent and unfounded accusations of infidelity | |

Non-Verbal Defenses

- Withdrawal into depression ("I can't do anything right")
- Smiling when hurt
- Refusal to discuss a known problem
- Mind-reading, or expectation that partner should be able to read mind
- Chasing from room to room when partner wants space
- Silent treatment
- Workaholism, over-committed schedule, burnout
- Over-use of TV or Internet
- Escape into hobbies (books, yard work, exercise...)
- Excessive sleep, or sleep while partner is trying to engage
- Withholding affection
- Escape into alcohol, drugs, binge eating, or other addictive behavior
- Escape into pornography or an emotional/sexual affair

Unhealthy Patterns

- Sense of superiority or inferiority (circle which one applies to you)
- Martyr attitude; attempts to induce guilt
- Attempts to control partner's choice of clothing, hair style, food, friends, etc.
- Caretaking behavior (treating partner like a child)
- Dependent behavior (treating partner like a parent)
- Sharing relationship problems with friends instead of with partner
- Sharing relationship problems with parents or in-laws
- Sharing relationship problems with children instead of with partner*
- Use of child to meet adult needs*

*If you checked any of these items, seek professional help immediately.