

Healing Harmony - Conflict Management Group

Group 7 Fighting Fair – Ground Rules

Communication and the ability to resolve conflict issues generally happens because of the way “I” handle the situation.

The following common ways of arguing that never work and NEVER improve your relationship:

- Fighting “dirty” never works.
- Letting your anger get out of control never works.
- Speaking before you “think” never works.
- Making assumptions never work.
- Letting your imagination run never works.
- Believing Cha dee (gossip) never works.
- Involving others (family, friends, etc.) never works.
- Taking sides never works.
- Avoiding the real issues never works.
- Getting violent (emotionally, verbally, physically) never works.
- Walking out on your partner never works.
- Doing to your partner what they have done to you never works (revenge).
- Disrespecting yourself or your partner never works.
- Bringing up the past never works.
- Blaming doesn’t work.
- “You always.....” doesn’t work.
- “You never.....” doesn’t work.
- Passive aggressive reactions (silent treatment, slamming things, avoidance, etc.) doesn’t work.
- Getting drunk, high, stoned, etc. never works.

Ground Rules:

- **Remain calm**
 - Try not to overreact to difficult situations.
 - By remaining calm it will be more likely that the other person will consider your viewpoint.
- **Express feelings in words, not actions.**
- **Telling someone directly and honestly how you feel** can be a powerful form of communication.
- **If you start to feel so angry or upset** that you feel you may lose control – take a “time out” and do something to help yourself feel calmer:
 - Deep breathing
 - Soothing music
 - Talk a walk
 - Go to the fitness center
- **Be specific about what is bothering you.**
 - Vague complaints are hard to work on.
- **Deal with ONE issue at a time.**
 - Don't bring up other issues – stick to the present conflict.
- **No “hitting below the belt.”**
 - “Pushing the other persons “buttons” never works.
- **Avoid accusations.**
 - Accusing the other person will only make them defensive and angry.
 - Instead talk about how YOU feel when they.....
- **Don't generalize.**
 - “You never....”
 - “You always....”

- **Avoid “Make believe.”**
 - Avoid exaggerating or inventing a complaint.
 - Stick with the facts and your honest feelings.

- **Don’t stockpile.**
 - Storing up lots of grievances and hurt feeling over time doesn’t work.
 - It’s impossible to deal with numerous old problems.
 - Try and deal with problems (in the now) that arise. Bury the past.

- **Avoid “clamming up”.**
 - Positive communication and “fixing” of problems only happens with talking and listening (good communication).

Now let’s practice some of these ideas:

Scenario:

Your partner had an affair 3 years ago and you found out about it. You “hear” from a friend that your partner is “talking” with someone else. You ask your partner about it and.....

Or

You and your partner are trying to maintain sobriety. Your partner “disappears” for 3 days. You ask you partner where they’ve been and what they’ve been doing.....

Ticket:

Welcomed “Healing Harmony – Conflict Management” group this morning and opened session with the Serenity Prayer. Reviewed previous discussed ideas on improving emotional intelligence. Today’s group topic are the “ground” rules for “fighting nice.” reviewed the 3 main styles of response to conflict (passive, aggressive, and assertive.) Then presented a variety of responses that do not resolve conflict in an assertive way. Went on to outline and process better ways:

1. Maintain calmness so as to think clearly.
2. Express feelings in words – not actions.
3. Take a “time out” as necessary to remain calm.
4. Be specific about what the issue is.
5. Deal with only one issue at a time.
6. No hitting below the belt.
7. Avoid accusations and “you” statements. Stop yourself from generalizing.
8. Stick with the facts – beware of your imagination.
9. Don’t stockpile or build up many grievances.
10. Avoid “clamming up.”

Group then went on to practice these ideas using a common scenario. Good group work, and clients enjoyed “acting” out what they are learning.

Plan:

- Continue looking at assertive conflict management.
- Continue encouraging ongoing sobriety and peer support.

very shy, but willing to engage with peers. Uncomfortable acting out a role.