

# COMMUNICATION FOR COUPLES

Here are some guidelines for communication. Ideally, each partner agrees to follow this guide, but it is also helpful if even one partner decides to communicate in this way...

1. Listen and do not interrupt.
2. Tell your partner what you have heard, to be sure you have it right, and to give you more time to react. At least acknowledge that you are listening (*eye contact, nodding, saying OK, etc*).
3. Avoid raised voices (or other controlling behaviours like blocking a doorway, threatening to leave, standing over your partner, etc).
4. If you have a feeling of heightened emotion (usually there are body signals) and you think that you might say something you don't mean or that will be hurtful, then say a previously agreed upon phrase (*or hand signal!*) such as **<I need a time out>** or **<Time please>**.

This means that one will allow the other partner to leave the room or area and not be followed, or further pursued. It signals that you are not prepared to go on in the conversation or argument, that you need some cooling off time, but you will return to the subject within an agreed upon time period. The partner taking leave will initiate the subject at that later time.

5. Daily greetings. At the beginning or end of each day, or whenever agreed upon, each will greet the other with a kind remark, compliment, or question about the other partner's day.

*Put this information where both can be easily reminded, like the back of your bedroom door.*