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Talk It Over Part 1: Feelings and Needs

Session Length: 2 hours

Objectives

Explore feelings and how feelings are expressed in relationships

Understand the nature of feelings and feeling states

Learn how to use an assertion “formula” to express feelings and needs and negotiate solutions

Rationale

Identifying and managing feelings in intimate relationships is a common communication issue. Accepting and expressing feelings in constructive ways is often challenging for men. When emotions arise in communication situations, men often attempt to control or minimize what they are feeling, resulting in roadblocks and impasses. This session seeks to help men identify and accept feelings as normal and better understand how inappropriate management of feelings results in communication breakdowns. An assertion formula (*Talk It Over*) is introduced as a framework for practicing openness and self-expression in intimate relationships.

Session Outline



Procedure	Time
Welcome and Process Homework	10 minutes
Feelings and Communication	25 minutes
Discussion: Accepting Feelings	15 minutes
Break	10 minutes
Talk It Over Formula	25 minutes
Practice: Using the Formula	25 minutes
Homework: <i>Talk It Over Practice</i>	10 minutes
Total Time for Session 4	120 minutes

Materials

Easel and flip chart (or erasable board)
 Magic markers; pencils, pens, writing paper
 Masking tape or thumb tacks
 Prepared flip chart *Accepting Feelings*
 Prepared flip charts *Talk It Over Formulas*
 Prepared flip charts *Examples*
 Copies of handouts

Preparation Notes

*Prepare
flip charts*



Accepting Feelings

Write out discussion points on a large piece of flip chart paper or poster board, as shown:

Accepting Feelings

A “feeling” is a powerful, body-based response.

A feeling is a label we give to our physical reaction to a situation.

All feelings are valid.

Feelings serve a purpose.

Allow yourself to feel your feelings.

Allow others to feel theirs.



Talk It Over Formula Declaring/Sharing

Write out the outline on a large piece of flip chart paper or poster board, as shown:

Declaring and Sharing	
The Feeling	I feel _____ I felt _____
The Event	About _____ When I _____ When you _____
Clarify	Because _____
Declaration	I want _____ I need _____ I hope _____ I just wanted to tell you about it.
Welcome feedback	Do you understand? Have you ever felt that way? Or give a smile or a hug.
LISTEN	



Talk It Over Formula
Write out the **Examples** for **Declaring/Sharing** on separate pieces of flip chart paper.

Example 1	
I <u>feel</u> bad	
<u>about</u> the fight we had last night	
<u>because</u> I realize I yelled at you.	
I <u>want</u> to apologize.	
<u>Will you</u> accept my apology?	
LISTEN	

Example 2	
No, thanks. I <u>feel</u> too tired to go dancing tonight.	
I <u>need</u> to take it easy	
<u>Ever felt</u> like you just couldn't move another muscle?	
LISTEN	



Talk It Over Formula Troubleshooting and Negotiating

Write out the outline
on a large piece
of flip chart paper
or poster board,
as shown:

Troubleshooting and Negotiating

The feeling	I feel _____ I felt _____
The behavior	When you _____ About _____
Clarify	Because _____
Request/Suggest	I'd like _____ I want _____ It would help me if _____
Seek feedback	Will you agree to try? Is this okay with you? How about it, honey?

LISTEN/NEGOTIATE



Talk It Over Formula
Write out the **Examples**
for **Troubleshooting/**
Negotiating on separate
pieces of flip chart paper.

Example 1

I feel irritated
when you nag at me for forgetting,
because I don't mean to forget.

It would help me if you would
write down the things you want
me to do each day.

Can we give that a try?

LISTEN/NEGOTIATE

Example 2

I feel so frustrated
when you walk away during an
argument

because it keeps us from solving
our problems.

I need for you to stop doing that.

Will you agree to try?

LISTEN/NEGOTIATE

Review case studies exercise



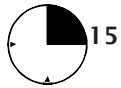
“Case studies” (p. 77) for practicing the *Talk It Over* formula are included at the end of the session. Cut them into strips for the group exercise. You may find it helpful to read over them before group and jot down how the formula can be applied to each situation.

Photocopy handouts



Accepting Feelings (handout, p. 75)
The Talk It Over Formula (handout, p. 76)
Talk It Over Case Studies (exercise, p. 77)
Talk It Over Practice (homework, p. 78)
Session Evaluation (form, p. 79)

Procedure



Welcome and Process Homework

Welcome participants as they arrive.

1 Use the first 10–15 minutes to review and process the homework assignment. Begin by reviewing a few key ideas from Session 3, such as:

Last week, we explored the importance of good communication and listening in relationships.

Good listening skills involve focus, concern for our partners, and the ability to tune out our own thoughts and tune into what our partner is saying. We also reviewed a technique for helping us stay focused on listening. Let’s talk for a few minutes about how things went with the homework assignment.

2 Ask for volunteers to share their experiences with the homework. Here are a few ideas for questions to start the ball rolling:



Process questions

First of all, what object did you use as your “speaker’s staff”?

How often did you use the speaker’s staff?

What kind of issues did you discuss?

How did your partner respond to the exercise?

What did you both learn?

- 3 Thank volunteers for their input.** (“Well done, guys. It takes a lot of guts to try something new like this. I’m glad you gave it a go.”) Encourage participants to keep on using this listening technique.



25

Feelings and Communication

- 1** During the next 20–25 minutes lead a discussion on identifying and accepting feelings that come up in communication situations.

Here are some ideas to include in the discussion:

Today we’re going to deal with an issue that most men have trouble with at one time or another in their lives—coming to grips with what we feel (our emotions) and how we express what we are feeling in our intimate relationships. Our discomfort, in part, comes from how we are socialized as men. The number one rule we grow up with is “No sissy stuff” or “Always be strong,” and that means that expressing certain feelings like fear, sadness, vulnerability, and even tenderness is taboo or off-limits.

We also get the message that feelings and emotions are somehow “inferior” to reason and logical thoughts. The fact is, there’s no escaping the reality of either of these aspects of our humanity. We are beings of heart (emotions) and mind (thoughts). We think and we feel. We have feelings about what we think and we think about what we feel. As men, much of our sense of self involves the need to believe that we are “in control” of a situation, to believe we have mastery over a situation. The whole issue of feelings and emotions may make us feel uncomfortable and ill-at-ease, because we can never truly have “control” over what we feel (and we surely never have control over what another person feels). Even though we are unable to “control” our feelings, we do have control over how we express them to others.

It’s normal from time to time to be confused and unsure about just what it is we really do feel. Learning to identify feelings, accept them as part of ourselves, and not be afraid of what we feel is an important step toward intimacy and closeness in relationships. In addition, the self-awareness that comes from accepting our feelings and accepting ourselves can help reduce stress and anxiety and improve self-esteem, and these are important issues for recovery as well. So let’s begin to get rid of the uneasiness we may have about dealing with our feelings. The first step is to simply begin talking about them.



Flip chart

2 Ask participants to help you generate a list of feelings. Use flip chart or erasable board to list them. You may want to assist in making sure a full range of emotions are represented. Keep the list visible to use as a guide. A well-rounded list may include:

affection	anger	anxiety
boredom	excitement	fear
frustration	grief	guilt
happiness	jealousy	joy
loneliness	love	sadness
sexual desire	shame	tension

3 Lead a discussion by going around the room and asking each participant to respond to the questions you will present to them. Give each member a chance to respond to one question before moving on to the next. You may choose to do this “round-robin” style with the first few questions (to get folks warmed up) and then use the rest of the questions in a general group discussion style—whatever seems best for your group. The main idea here is to help participants acknowledge that they do experience a range of feelings, to explore their comfort level with feelings, and to think about how they express their feelings and how they react to expressions of feelings from others.

Introduce the discussion as follows:

We’ve come up with a fairly good list of the kinds of feelings we all experience and deal with on a regular basis. Now let’s move to the next level—let’s talk about how we “feel” about the feelings—how we express them and how we react to them when we see them in others.



Discussion questions

Which of the feelings on our list do you feel most comfortable expressing? Give an example of a situation where you are most likely to express this feeling.

Which of these emotions do you find it difficult to express? Give an example of a situation where you are most likely to find it difficult to express this feeling.

What feelings are you most comfortable with when your partner expresses them?

Can you think of a situation when you became uncomfortable or angry when your partner tried to express feeling? What was the feeling? What made you uncomfortable?

- 4 Thank participants for their input.** (“This is the kind of discussion that separates the boys from the men, and there ain’t nobody but men here based on what I’ve heard. Thanks for being so honest, guys. Good job!”)



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Discussion: Accepting Feelings

Handout,
p. 75

Flip chart

- 1 Use the next 15 minutes to highlight and discuss some key issues about understanding and dealing with feelings in the real world. Distribute the *Accepting Feelings* handout and use the prepared flip chart to lead the discussion.** Encourage questions and provide clarification, as needed.

Include the following points:

Learning to accept our own feelings and being able to accept what our partner may be feeling are equally important for a good, intimate relationship. Remember that we are discussing the acceptance of the feelings themselves, which may be different from accepting how people respond to or act on their feelings. In other words, I can learn to be okay with and accept it when my partner feels angry. However, if she decides to slap me because she’s angry, I don’t necessarily have to accept that kind of behavior. This goes both ways. I have the right to express my feelings to my partner—but I don’t have the right to express them in a way that is physically or emotionally hurtful to her.

Let’s review some ideas or ways of thinking about feelings and emotions. As with most things, the more we understand, the more we are able to accept.

- **A “feeling” is a powerful, body-based response. A feeling is a label we give to our physical reaction to a situation.**

It is believed that all feelings originate in our bodies—that is, we really feel our feelings. As we experience the feeling, our brains try to put a label on it, often based on our bodily reactions (for example, increased heart rate, nausea, stomach sensations, sweaty palms, etc.). Some of our ways of describing feelings reflects this. For example:

- ◆ the “broken heart,” of sadness or depression may actually involve a heavy feeling in the chest from shallow breathing;

- ◆ being on “pins and needles” when we are anxious accurately describes the prickly feeling on the outer skin when an anxiety-producing situation causes circulation and blood pressure changes;
- ◆ a great loss or disappointment may indeed “just make me sick,” reflecting stomach sensations brought on by increased gastric juice production in response to the situation;
- ◆ fair-skinned folks may turn “as red as a beet” when an embarrassing or uncomfortable situation stimulates respiration and circulation changes;
- ◆ and being “hot under the collar” describes a physical sensation that many of us experience when a situation results in anger or frustration.



Discussion
questions

Can you think of other examples?

What are some physical sensations that you experience related to certain feelings?

Instead of thinking about feelings as complicated and mysterious, it may be more helpful to practice getting a “feel” for your feelings. Pay attention to your body’s reactions to situations—breathing, blood pressure, chest and stomach sensations, heartbeat, etc.—and begin to learn how to identify and accept what you are feeling at any given time.

■ All feelings are valid. Feelings serve a purpose.

Even when the actual feeling itself is pretty rotten or uncomfortable (for example, grief, shame, or embarrassment) it’s helpful to remember that feelings are part of being human. Feelings are sort of like our barometer in life—they alert us when things are going well for us and when our needs are being met. Under these circumstances we may feel happy, content, peaceful, hopeful, etc. Feelings also alert us when things are not going well, when our needs are not being met, or when our rights are being violated. For example, we might feel angry, afraid, sad, fed-up, suffocated, etc. Respecting feelings and understanding that all feelings happen for a reason (both in ourselves and in others) can help us become more comfortable about acknowledging what we feel and accepting what others feel.



Discussion
questions

What would happen to us if we experienced no feelings whatsoever?

Give an example of a situation when you realized how important feelings are.

■ **Allow yourself to feel your feelings. Allow others to feel theirs.**

An important word to avoid thinking to yourself, or saying to others, when it comes to feelings is “should” (or “ought”). For example, when we say to others, even though we are just trying to comfort them, things like: “you shouldn’t feel that way,” “you shouldn’t let it upset you,” or “you should feel happy about that.” Or when we say to ourselves “I shouldn’t have felt so angry,” or “I’m a man, and a man shouldn’t feel scared,” or “I really shouldn’t be feeling this way.”

We feel what we feel—no one can argue with that. Other people feel what they feel. We can’t argue with that. Instead of trying to “rescue” others from their feelings or trying to hide or discount our feelings, it’s usually better just to take a deep breath (or two) and let feelings run their course.

Have you ever told someone, “you shouldn’t feel like that?”

When we want to comfort or show support, how could we say it differently?



Discussion
questions

2 **Conclude the discussion by adding:**

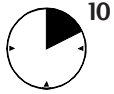
Feelings come and feelings go. That’s the nature of feelings. In the course of a day and over the course of a lifetime, we experience many, many different feelings. And while it’s important to not burden ourselves or others with “should feel” and “should not” feel, an exception needs to be pointed out. Having certain unpleasant feelings “all the time,” with little let-up, constantly, day-in and day-out, is not healthy. For example, constantly feeling sad and depressed, or angry and rageful, or guilty and ashamed, without relief, will wear even the strongest man down. This kind of intensity in feelings needs some counseling, and in some cases maybe even some medication (anti-depressants) to help get things back on a more even keel.

When it comes to behavior (what we do with our feelings), however, we must respect the restrictions implied by the word “should.” For example, it is unacceptable (to most individuals and to the law) to hit

others or use violence or threats just because we feel angry, jealous, or provoked. We can file hurting others because of what we're feeling under "SHOULD NOT DO." Likewise, others do not have the right to hurt us or hit us because they happen to feel "upset." That's acting on or acting out feelings, as opposed to being aware of them, accepting them as part of who we are, and then managing them like men (instead of kids).

After the break, we'll spend the rest of the session learning how to do just that. We'll look at a skill-formula we can use in our relationships to help us manage our feelings, and express what we feel and what we need in a healthy way.

3 Thank participants for their input.



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Break



25

Talk It Over Formula

- 1 Use the next 25 minutes to introduce the *Talk It Over* "formulas" that can be used to make requests, begin negotiations to resolve conflict, or express feelings and needs.

Begin by asking the group to explain the difference between I-Statements and You-Statements. Provide clarification, as needed. Include points about the importance of an assertive attitude, as well.

Here are some ideas to include in the discussion:

I-Statements are a major component in the skill of communicating effectively. Within intimate relationships, the ability to speak honestly to each other, listen (really listen), and resolve conflicts and problems in a way that leaves both people feeling content is critical. Unless couples are willing to learn the skills that allow this type of communication to happen, they're likely to have a rough time in their relationship.

The skill-formulas that we're going to look at today can help build more effectiveness into how we handle important communication in our relationships. Keep in mind, there's a lot of communication that goes on in relationships—we joke around, we talk about what to have

for dinner, we share “gossip” or stories about our day with each other. Some communication is light and lively, and some communication is more critical or important. The *Talk It Over* method that we’ll discuss helps highlight skills for talking through the important stuff. For example:

- ◆ Sharing feelings or ideas important to either partner
- ◆ Settling conflict and solving problems
- ◆ Negotiating changes in behavior or attitude
- ◆ Apologizing
- ◆ Refusing requests

Let’s look at the steps (or structure) of the *Talk It Over* formulas and examples of how they sound when used.



Flip charts

2 Use the prepared flip charts to highlight the structure of the *Talk It Over* formulas and discuss their uses in important communication within relationships.

Use masking tape or tacks to post charts on the wall after discussion so participants can refer back to them. Emphasize that although these “formulas” may seem awkward or artificial, like all skills they become easier to use with practice. Encourage participants to keep an open mind and give them a chance.

Declaring and Sharing

Example 1

I feel bad
about the fight we had last night
because I realize I yelled at you.
I want to apologize.
Will you accept my apology?

LISTEN

Example 2

No, thanks. I feel too tired
to go dancing tonight.
I need to take it easy
Ever felt like you just couldn’t move
another muscle?

LISTEN

Troubleshooting/Negotiating

Example 1

I feel irritated
when you nag at me for forgetting,
because I don’t mean to forget.
It would help me if you would write down
the things you want me to do each day.
Can we give that a try?

LISTEN/NEGOTIATE

Example 2

I feel so frustrated
when you walk away during an
argument
because it keeps us from solving our
problems.
I need for you to stop doing that.
Will you agree to try?

LISTEN/NEGOTIATE

Emphasize the following points during the discussion:

The formulas follow the same steps, but there's a different "twist" for each of them. In the first example, the formula steps are used to "share and declare" things with your partner (or others). This formula is helpful for telling others about your ideas and feelings, sharing your inner world, apologizing, or saying "no" (refusing). When you use the "share and declare" formula, you aren't really asking for anything or expressing concern about a problem. You're simply telling about yourself, your ideas, your feelings, or your intentions. And you'll notice the formulas end with an invitation for feedback—a signal to the other person that you're open to listening to them, too.

Depending on the situation, include the steps or parts that seem right for what you are trying to express. For example:

- ◆ "I felt really sad when I saw that TV program about orphans because it reminded me of a guy I used to play football with. Did I ever tell you about him?"
- ◆ "I feel bad about the fight we had last night because I realize I yelled at you. I want to apologize. Will you accept my apology?"
- ◆ "No, thanks. I feel too tired to go dancing tonight. I need to take it easy. Ever felt like you just couldn't move?"

The formula steps are also used when you need to bring issues "to the table" to talk over with your partner. Most often, this includes expressing your feelings or concerns about your partner's behavior/attitude, negotiating to make changes, or solving conflicts and problems. These situations are sometimes more emotional than others because disagreement or conflict may be involved. In these situations, if both partners are willing to stay as calm as possible and use the formula steps to guide their discussion, a solution or compromise will be easier to get to. Here are some examples:

- ◆ I feel irritated when you nag at me for forgetting, because I don't mean to forget. It would help me if you would write down the things you want me to do each day. Can we give that a try? (Listen)
- ◆ I feel so frustrated when you walk away during an argument because it keeps us from solving our problems. I need for you to stop doing that. Will you agree to try? (Listen)
- ◆ I feel myself getting really resentful when we always have to do things your way because it feels like my needs don't matter. I'd like for us to talk about ways we can compromise on some things. Will you sit down and talk this through with me? (Listen)

As you can see, there are six (6) steps or parts to the *Talk It Over* technique. We state them in a style that is most comfortable for us. The main thing is to understand the reason for each step and why it's important.

- We want to let out what we are **feeling** in words, not actions (“I feel,” “I felt,” “I am starting to feel”). Sometimes all we can do is give the other person a sense of what we are feeling, based on what our bodies are telling us. For example, “I’m feeling tense,” or “I felt on edge all night,” or “I have a nice, warm feeling in my chest right now,” or “I can feel a lump in my throat when I think about home.” Other times, we may want to spend time thinking through the feelings, getting to their “root,” and then tell our partner about them. For example, “I started feeling really tense when you called your brother. When I thought about it I realized that I feel angry and worried when you call him because he’s still dealing.”
- Occasionally, we may need to say “I don’t know what I’m feeling, exactly.” When we feel that way, we usually have to do some serious thinking to get to the “root.” Because we are all complex, we may feel more than one thing at once—even feelings that appear to be opposites, like happy and sad. (For example, people cry at weddings.) When we state what we are feeling, it may be necessary to use more than one “feeling word”—we may need two or three to get our point across.
- We also want to describe the **behavior** that is causing us a problem or concern. By staying focused on behavior, rather than making personal attacks or making assumptions about the other person’s motives, it is easier to stay focused on making changes and finding solutions to the problem.
- It’s also helpful to **clarify** what’s going on for us, to help the other person better understand our position. This is often worded as “because...”.
- **Requesting** a change or **suggesting** a possible solution helps keep the ball rolling toward resolution.
- **Inviting** feedback or making a direct appeal for cooperation opens the door for the other person to give you their thoughts, and indicates that you are willing to **listen**.
- **Timing is important.** It’s a good idea to make sure your partner has the time and energy to sit down with you and

use the formula to talk things out. For example, you might say: “Honey, something’s been bugging me and I need to talk about it—do you have a minute?” However, you can also use the formula right on the spot, if needed. For example, if you become angry, hurt, or frustrated about something, use the formula right on the spot to express your feelings in a respectful way, rather than holding in those feelings and stewing.

- Another important thing to keep in mind is your **body language** and **tone of voice**. The *Talk It Over* formula is designed to smooth out communication and allow partners to express their honest feelings and needs. Avoid sending a “double-message.” Keep your tone of voice level, make eye contact, and avoid sarcasm and other roadblocks.

Remember, this is not a formula for getting your way all the time, or for ordering your partner around. It’s an assertiveness tool. It gives you and your partner a “formula” for expressing feelings and asking for what each of you needs in an open, honest, and respectful manner.

3 Encourage discussion and practice by asking participants to jot down an example of a relationship problem or issue they experienced recently. Go around the room and ask each person to briefly describe the issue, and then to practice how he would have responded had he used the *Talk It Over* technique. Provide guidance and clarification, as needed. Give lots of encouragement and compliments.

Process the discussion with a few of the following questions:



Process
questions

How did it feel to use this formula?

What did you find most difficult about using the formula?

In what ways do you think this technique might improve communication?



25



Handout,
p. 76
Exercise,
p. 77

Practice: Using the Formula

- 1** Distribute the *Talk It Over Formula* handout and use the next 25 minutes to practice the formula, using case studies of communication situations. Encourage a mix of both “request making” and “declaring” uses for the formula. Use the provided case studies, or if your group is open to it, ask them to suggest more “real life” situations to practice with. Work on one case study or situation at a time, calling on volunteers to practice using the formula. Encourage group members to provide constructive feedback to each other after each practice. Remind them to pay attention to body language, tone of voice, and maintaining an assertive attitude, as well as the parts of the formula itself.

After practicing with a couple of case studies, you may want to suggest that group members role play with each other in order to practice the listening and negotiating component, as well. Role play can be an effective technique for allowing people to practice skills and put those skills into their own styles. You’ll need to judge for yourself whether or not your group would be comfortable with role play. (For more suggestions on role play, see article in Appendix B, pp. 183-185).

- 2** Process this exercise using some of the following questions:



Process
questions

- Was it easy or hard to apply this formula?
- What did you have the hardest time with?
- What do you think is most helpful about using this formula?
- How will you be able to use this formula in “real life?”

- 3** Thank participants for their input. (“Good job, guys. Learning a new way of doing things is always challenging—you all did great!”)
- 4** Provide closure by wrapping up on some of the key points raised during the session.

Here are some ideas for closing comments:

We’ve spent today’s session exploring some of the “heavier” issues involved in improving communication in our relationships. In order to

be close and stay close with someone we care about, we have to be willing to be brave and share what we feel in a positive way. As men, many of us have had a lifetime of avoiding our own feelings and being uncomfortable with our partner's feelings. In order to have stronger relationships and a stronger recovery, we've got to take a chance and begin growing beyond that.

We've touched on a couple of skills or techniques we can begin practicing that will help. I know that these techniques may seem silly and feel really awkward—that's normal because they're new. All we're suggesting here is that you give it a chance, give it a try.

Remember, too, to keep working on an assertive attitude. It's an attitude of mutual respect, openness, being willing to listen, and being willing to compromise.

5 Highlight next session:

Next week we're going to continue looking at ways to express ourselves clearly in relationships. We'll look at how to apply these new skills to resolve conflict with our partners. Today we learned the foundation. Next week, we'll learn how to use it in "tough" relationship situations.



Homework,
p. 78

Homework: *Talk It Over Practice*

1 Introduce the homework assignment and distribute *Talk It Over Practice* handouts.

Your assignment for the coming week is to share the ideas you learned today with your partner. Talk to her about I-Statements and the *Talk It Over* formula, and show her how it works.

Hang the handouts describing I -Statements and the steps for the *Talk It Over* formula where you both can see them during the week (on the refrigerator or the bathroom mirror). Practice using these techniques in your day-to-day dealings.

The only "rules" are to be patient and understanding with each other. Don't get hung up arguing or debating about who used the formula correctly and who didn't. (Keep on using your "listening" staff, since that will help you both stay focused on listening). Remember that you are both trying to learn a new skill, a new way of doing things. Neither of you is expected to be perfect at it—just give it an honest try. I think you may find that after a while it will get easier.

2 Thank participants for attending and invite them back next week.



Evaluation,
p. 79

3 Ask each person to complete an evaluation form before leaving.

ACCEPTING FEELINGS

**A “feeling” is a powerful,
body-based response.**

**A feeling is a label we give to our
physical reaction to a situation.**

All feelings are valid.

Feelings serve a purpose.

Allow yourself to feel your feelings.

Allow others to feel theirs.

The Talk It Over Formula

I feel _____

I felt _____

When you _____

About _____

Because _____

I want _____

It would help me if _____

Let's try _____

Will you agree?

LISTEN

Case Studies

Talk It Over with I-Statements

Your partner is in the habit of leaving clothes all over the house. Half the time the place looks like a tornado hit it, and it's embarrassing when friends drop by. You want your partner to pick up her clothes.



Your partner frequently keeps you waiting, especially when you both are leaving the house together. It's a little thing, but it gets on your nerves. You want to tell her how you feel about it.

Your partner is forgetful. You're never sure if she is going to remember important details, like paying the light bill. You want her to work on this problem.

Your partner is moody. Sometimes you feel like you're walking on egg shells around her. You can't tell what's going to set her off. You want her to know how her mood is affecting you.

Your partner doesn't get along with one of your cousins. She sometimes puts this person down. You like your cousin and don't like listening to her put him down.

Your partner has been sick lately, but she refuses to go see a doctor. You're worried about her. You want to tell her about it.

You have been feeling frustrated and irritable lately. You can tell that your partner is put-off by your mood. You want to tell her that you've had a lot on your mind lately.

Your partner is very "mothering" toward you. You know she's just trying to be nice, but it gets on your nerves. You want her to chill.

Your partner has trouble handling money. You're on a tight budget, and her spending is getting out of hand. You want her to stick to the budget.

Your partner often forgets to put gas in the car. Yesterday, you ran out of gas on the way to work and your boss got mad. You want your partner to be more mindful of keeping gas in the car.

Session 4 Homework
Talk It Over Practice
Partner Information

Here are some communication skills to practice during the coming week.

Practice using the *Talk It Over* formulas when you have something to say or to suggest new ways of doing things to avoid problems:

Troubleshooting and Negotiating

The feeling	I feel _____ I felt _____
The behavior	When you _____ About _____
Clarify	Because _____
Request/Suggest	I'd like _____ I want _____ It would help me if _____
Seek feedback	Will you agree to try? Is this okay with you? How about it, honey?

LISTEN/NEGOTIATE

Example

I feel irritated
when you nag at me for forgetting,
because I don't mean to forget.
It would help me if you would write down the things you want me to do each day.
Can we give that a try?

LISTEN/NEGOTIATE

Declaring and Sharing

The Feeling	I feel _____ I felt _____
The Event	About _____ When I _____ When you _____
Clarify	Because _____
Declaration	I want _____ I need _____ I hope _____ I just wanted to tell you about it.
Welcome feedback	Do you understand? Have you ever felt that way? Can you accept this? Or give a smile or a hug.

LISTEN

Example

I feel bad
about the fight we had last night
because I realize I yelled at you.
I want to apologize.
Will you accept my apology?

LISTEN

SESSION EVALUATION
Time Out! For Men
Session 4

THIS BOX IS TO BE COMPLETED BY DATA COORDINATOR:

SITE # __ __ [1-2]	CLIENT ID# __ __ __ __ [3-6]	DATE: __ __ __ __ __ __ MO DAY YR [7-12]	COUNSELOR ID# __ __ [13-14]
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INSTRUCTIONS: Please take a minute to give us some feedback about how you liked this session.

1. Use one word to describe your reaction to today's class. _____

2. What is the most important thing you learned today?

3. How might using the *Talk It Over* formula help your relationship?

4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how do you rate today's class? (Circle your rating)

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	__ __
										[15-16]
Poor			Pretty Good				Excellent			

5. Do you have any suggestions to help make this class better?