

TIPS FOR NAVAGATING YOUR RELATIONSHIP THROUGH A CRISIS PERIOD

- **BOUNDARIES**

- Boundaries around a relationship in crisis need to be discussed, intentional, and tighter than usual.
- Areas that seem to be a trigger are a good starting point for needed boundaries.
- Be specific with what you need when you communicate with your partner. Give them actual examples of how they can comfort you, support you, hear you, etc.
- Consider boundaries on the details of information you ask for as well as share.

- **COMMUNICATE WITH KINDESS**

- Avoid the 4 horsemen
 - Criticism
 - Contempt
 - Defensiveness
 - Stonewalling
- Press pause when it feels like things are going on too long, going in circles, or becoming too intense. It is important to make plans or be intentional about returning to the discussion at a later stage.
- Honesty is important. Find a way to be both kind and honest.
- Make intentional and obvious attempts to learn about your partner.



- **THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE INPUT**

- Relationships need positive input. The minimum ratio should be 5:1 positive to negative interactions.
- Nurture a culture of appreciation. Be intentional about looking for things you appreciate about your partner as well as letting them know you appreciate those things.
- Look for things that are part of the new commitment you are building

- **TRUST**

- Understanding that trust is something that must be built for BOTH parties is key. It cannot be that the injured party expects the other to “do all the work”.
- The injured party needs to communicate to their partner when they notice that trust is growing. Recognize or acknowledge the efforts that the acting party is making to rebuild the relationship.
- Both partners must create a safe space for communication. We cannot expect our partner to share openly if we attack them, for example.

- **GRIEF**

- Much of the fallout of an affair resembles that of grief.
- Emotions can come in waves and seemingly out of nowhere.
- While you are grieving the death of the initial marriage, the next marriage, the one you are building with your partner has the potential to be better than the initial one ever was.
- Grieving the old relationship is necessary for the new one to build.

