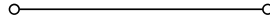


The power of play: A Relationship exercise

ADAPTED FROM CHEN, 2019

"Play is the antidote to threat." -Stephen Porges



If a conflict arises that makes one partner feel unsafe, try this playful exercise to help alleviate the tension. However, if you're unsure of what "unsafe" feels like for you, it's important to seek guidance from a therapist and establish a self-awareness practice beforehand.

Follow these simple steps to resolve any disagreement you might have with your partner:

1. Look back on your recent disagreements and pick one that you will recreate for this game.
2. Choose an animal, any animal, that you want to represent yourself. You'll be using this as a guide to mimic the movements and sounds that the animal makes.
3. Without using any human language, reenact the disagreement using only the movements and sounds of your chosen animal. Feel free to bark, hiss, meow, roar, slither, pounce, scurry, but don't try to fly!
4. Set a timer for 10 minutes and try to come to a resolution before time runs out.
5. Once the timer goes off, take a moment to discuss the game with your partner. You can use the following questions:

How did you experience yourself differently in animal form?

How did you experience your partner differently in animal form?

What did you notice in your body as you did the exercise?

What surprised you?

Would you do it again?