

Conflict Patterns

Identify and break negative cycles

Instructions:

Most couples fall into predictable conflict patterns. Identifying your pattern is the first step to changing it.

Part 1: Identify Your Pattern

Check which pattern(s) you recognize in your relationship:

- **Pursue-Withdraw:** One partner pushes for resolution while the other shuts down or leaves
- **Attack-Defend:** One criticizes, the other gets defensive and counterattacks
- **Blame Game:** Both partners focus on whose fault it is rather than solving the problem
- **Silent Treatment:** One or both stop communicating when upset
- **Escalation:** Small disagreements quickly become big fights

Part 2: Analyze a Recent Conflict

What triggered the conflict?

What did each person do/say?

What emotions were underneath the conflict?

What pattern did you fall into?

What was each person really needing?

Part 3: Create a New Pattern

Design a healthier way to handle conflict:

When conflict starts, we will:

Our timeout signal will be:

During a timeout, each person agrees to:

We will reconvene to discuss within:

Our ground rules for fair fighting:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Action Steps:

- Practice your new pattern during a calm moment
- Review this worksheet after your next conflict
- Celebrate when you successfully break the old pattern