

# Mirror Exercise



**Instructions:** The Mirror Exercise helps us break the pursuer and avoider patterns of communication. It supports couples or family members to practice giving and receiving information. Choose one person to be the sender, the other/s will be receivers. **Take turns being a sender or receiver.**

## Part 1: Appreciation

Senders are to share three appreciations with each receiver.

**Sender:** One thing I appreciate about you is...

**Receiver:** I hear that you appreciate... [repeat back in the sender's words]. Is there more?

*Sender can either add anything they feel the receiver missed or say "That is all for now". The receiver always repeats back what they have heard.*

## Part 2: Empathy and Validation

Senders are to share one to two things they would like more of from the receiver. This should be something that they have already done that has *worked*. Receivers will **validate** this by talking about what makes sense to them, knowing the sender as they do, about this request. The Receiver will also show **empathy**, by discussing what they imagine the sender would feel. *Notice that at no point does anyone agree/disagree.*

**Sender:** Something I would like more of is...

**Receiver:** I hear that you would like more... [repeat back in the sender's words]. Is there more?

*Sender can either add anything they feel the receiver missed or say "That is all for now".*

**Receiver:** What makes sense to me about you saying that is...

**Sender:** I hear that it makes sense to you because...

**Receiver:** I imagine if I did that, you would feel... Are there any other feelings you would like to add?

**Sender:** What is coming up for me right now is... [focus on your feelings], *OR* "That is all for now."

*The receiver always repeats back what they have heard.*

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## Part 3: Feedback

Senders are to share one thing they would like the receiver to do differently. This will still use **validation** and **empathy** responses. Receivers will also get a chance to express themselves in this dialogue. *Notice that at no point does anyone agree/disagree with the request.* These exercises are to practice listening, validating, and understanding the other person. It is not a goal to come to an agreement, or to make a plan of action.

**Sender:** One thing I would like you to do differently is...

**Receiver:** I hear that you would like me to... [repeat back in the sender's words]. Is there more?

Sender can either add anything they feel the receiver missed or say "That is all for now".

**Receiver:** What makes sense to me about you saying that is...

**Sender:** I hear that it makes sense to you because...

**Receiver:** I imagine if I did that, you would feel... Are there any other feelings you would like to add?

**Sender:** What is coming up for me right now is... *OR* That is all for now.

*The receiver always repeats back what they have heard.*

**Receiver:** Hearing your request, what is coming up for me right now is... [focus on your feelings].

**Sender:** What makes sense to me about you saying that is...

**Receiver:** I hear that it makes sense to you because...

**Sender:** Are there any other feelings you would like to add?

*Receiver can either add anything they feel the sender missed or say, "That is all for now".*

**Homework:** Practice using the validation and empathy responses in every-day conversations and during conflict. Validating and empathising with the other person first can help reduce the intensity and length of conflict.

