

Healthy Conflict & Communication Cheat Sheet

5 Healthy Communication Strategies

01 Use 'I' statements	02 Acknowledge first	03 Ask for a timeout	04 Actually listen	05 One thing at a time
Speak from your own experience rather than assigning blame. <i>e.g. 'I feel unheard when...' not 'You never listen.'</i>	Before explaining your side, acknowledge what the other person said. <i>e.g. 'I hear that you felt hurt' before 'but here is what I meant.'</i>	If you feel flooded, ask for 20 minutes and actually come back. <i>e.g. 'I need a few minutes but I promise I am coming back to this.'</i>	Put your rebuttal down and reflect back what you heard before responding. <i>e.g. 'So what I am hearing is... Did I get that right?'</i>	Stay with what is in front of you right now. Everything else can have its own conversation. <i>e.g. 'Can we finish this one first so neither of us feels rushed?'</i>

Validating Statements

When someone is upset	When someone feels unheard	During conflict	After conflict
- I can see why you felt that way. - That makes sense given what happened. - Your feelings are valid. - I am sorry that hurt you.	- I want to understand. Help me see it. - I realize I have not been fully present. - You matter to me and so does how you feel. - I do not want to brush past this. - I really do care about how you feel.	- Can we slow down for a second? - I do not want to fight. I just want us to understand each other. - I think we are both getting heated. - I am sorry, I did not mean it that way. - I need a minute but I am coming back.	- I think you were right. - I am sorry for my part in how that went. - Can we try again? - I appreciate you staying in this. - I care about us more than being right.

Conflict De-Escalation Techniques

Lower your voice When voices rise, tension does too. Bringing yours down sends a safety signal to both of you.	Pause and breathe Three slow breaths before responding is the difference between reacting and actually choosing.	Name what is happening Saying 'I notice we are both getting heated' out loud can interrupt the cycle.	Soften how you start How you open a hard conversation shapes everything that follows.	Ask instead of assume Try 'help me understand what was going on for you' instead of telling them why they did it.	Agree to come back Set an actual time to return. A plan makes the pause feel safe for both people.
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The goal is not to win. The goal is for both of you to feel heard.

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