# Common Relationship Problems

## Poor Communication

The way some couples communicate with each other can cause more stress and tension.

**Some examples of poor communication are when:**

- One partner has a demanding communication style. This leads the other partner to refuse to communicate.
- One partner tries to control the other with negative emotions (like anger and sadness).
- One partner criticizes the other instead of focusing on behaviors.

**Ways to improve communication:**

- Remove all distractions (like TV noise). Set a time to talk that works for both of you.
- Don’t interrupt your partner. Summarize what you heard them say before replying.
- Focus on problematic behaviors. Don’t insult your partner as an individual.
- Also talk about the positive parts of the relationship.

## Poor Problem-Solving Skills

Problem solving skills are important to working out relationship issues.

**Some common issues in problem solving are:**

- Not realizing the true cause of the problem. For example, thinking your partner’s recent disinterest means he/she is losing feelings for you. But the real reason is work stress.
- Choosing a solution before thinking about all the options.
- Trying to solve the problem without your partner’s input.

**Ways to improve problem solving skills:**

- Divide big problems into smaller ones. Deal with the most important ones first.
- Think about multiple options before choosing a solution.
- Work with your partner as a partner. Both of you need to feel involved in the process and result.
**Inadequate Partner Support**

Both partners need to give and receive enough support for a relationship to work.

**Some common problems with partner support are:**

- Having unrealistic expectations.
- Relying on your partner for all your needs. This likely puts too much pressure on them.
- Not talking about your needs.

**Ways to improve partner support:**

- Identify the support you need and be realistic.
- Know that your partner will not be able to meet all of your needs.
- Talk about your expectations clearly. Check if your partner understands or can fulfill them.

**Lack of Quality Time Together**

Quality time does not work when you are tired or distracted. You may end up arguing.

**Quality time together involves:**

- Both of you planning to spend quality time together. Focusing on positive things.
- Identifying shared interests that you can enjoy together. Also think of new ones to try.

**Personal Differences in the Relationship**

All couples will have differences. Dealing with these differences is important.

**Ways to deal with personal differences:**

- Do not try to force your partner to be exactly like you. Work to accept differences, even when they are big ones.
- Do not demand that your partner change to meet all your expectations. Work to accept the differences.
- Try to see things from your partner’s point of view. You don’t have to agree with it. But you can try to respect your partner’s differences and points of view.
Golden Rules for Arguing

**DO:**
- Know why you are arguing before you start.
- Spend some time fixing the problem.
- Sit down and make eye contact.
- Speak personally about what you feel.
- Accept when the other person makes a good point.
- Agree to disagree if you can’t agree.
- Focus on the matter at hand.
- Stop arguing and separate if there is any chance of violence.

**DON’T:**
- Behave violently or disrespectfully.
- Try to hurt the other person's feelings.
- Spread problems to entire relationship.
- Bring up old unresolved arguments.
- Walk away without deciding when to resume the talk (unless there is a chance of violence).
- Bring other peoples' opinions into the argument.
- Argue about something for more than an hour, late at night, or after drinking alcohol.