



HOT TOPICS EXERCISE

BUILDING A BETTER RELATIONSHIP

HOT TOPICS TO DISCUSS

This activity is aimed to help you create a foundation for discussing potentially challenging topics.

Getting started

The exercise consists of the following rules.

- Meet for a 30 minute time period each month. During the set time, you and your partner will explore questions and concerns aimed to improve the relationship and solidify your bond.
- Meeting place should be distraction free.
- Explore the questions in-depth.
- Consistency is vital.

FRIENDLY REMINDER

Make it a priority to commit time to this exercise. The important factor to remember is that you are working to create a meaningful experience while showing your significant other that they are valued, needed, and loved.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

1. What are 5 main issues in the relationship? (take time to explore issues focused on subjects connected to: intimacy, trust, communication, respect, commitment, acceptance, divorce, and feeling loved or valued).

- How does the issue(s) listed above impact the relationship?
- How does the issue(s) listed above impact me personally?
- What are triggers connected to the issue? (an example can include the issue of healthy communication. A trigger can be that during confrontation, partner A, shuts down and doesn't want to continue the conversation. The behavior of shutting down is connected to partner A, feeling anxious during conversations that are confrontational in nature).

Below is a case example for question 1:

- **Issue:**
 - *You are not spending enough time with me.*
- **Why it is an issue?**
 - *This is an issue because I feel that you care more about your friends at work than me. I feel that you don't like being at home. I don't feel important to you.*
- **How the issue impacts you personally and the relationship?**

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- *The issue impacts me personally because I feel like something is wrong with me for you not to want to be with me. The issue impacts the relationship because I feel that we don't spend time together. I feel that you don't enjoy our relationship.*
- **What triggers/causes the issue?**
 - *I think that the reason you don't want to spend time with me is because of me. I don't know exactly why, but that's my best guess.*
- **A mutually built plan of action to overcome the issue?**
 - *Together we can commit to the love language exercise, weekly check-in exercise, and the appreciation exercise. We can also spend time evaluating this issue at the end of the month to make sure that we are doing our best to overcome it.*

2. Do you trust me? (If so, why. If not, why not).

- I trust you because?
- I have a difficult time trusting you because?

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- Acts that have promoted trust in the past include?
- We can provide each other with an opportunity to build trust by? (To improve trust partners can strive to spending time together. Time meaning, going on dates or having conversations focused on the future of the relationship. The 50 dates and conversation topics exercises can be a place to start).

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