

Module 2: The Art of Effective Conflict Resolution

Overview

- Understanding conflict as an opportunity for growth
- Different conflict resolution styles: Avoiding, Accommodating, Competing, Compromising, Collaborating
- Practical strategies for resolving conflicts constructively

Practical Strategies

1. Active Listening
2. Using 'I' Statements
3. Taking a Time-Out
4. Finding Common Ground
5. Seeking Professional Help

Case Study: Emily and John

Meet Emily and John. They faced a major conflict when Emily received a job offer in another city. John was initially resistant to the move, fearing the change and its impact on their lives. The conflict escalated to the point where they were considering separating.

They decided to seek professional help. Through therapy, they learned to practice active listening and use 'I' statements. They also started finding common ground, focusing on their shared values and goals. Over time, they managed to find a compromise where Emily took the job and John found a remote work opportunity.

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Their willingness to work through the conflict collaboratively not only resolved the issue but also strengthened their relationship.

Reflection Exercise Instructions

1. Identify a recent conflict you had with your partner.
2. Reflect on how you approached the conflict.
3. Determine which conflict resolution style you used.
4. Consider how you could apply active listening, 'I' statements, taking a time-out, finding common ground, and seeking help.
5. Discuss these reflections with your partner.

Additional Tools and Exercises

Active Listening Practice:

- Take turns with your partner sharing a recent experience.
- Practice active listening by giving full attention, avoiding interruptions, and summarizing what you've heard.

'I' Statements Practice:

- Use the format: 'I feel [emotion] when [situation] because [reason]. What I need is [need].'
- Example: 'I feel stressed when we do not plan our week because I like to know what is coming up. What I need is for us to have a planning session every Sunday.'

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Time-Out Agreement:

- Agree on a signal or word to use when a conflict escalates.
- Use this time to cool down and reflect before returning to the discussion.

Common Ground Exercise:

- List areas of agreement and shared values before discussing conflicts.
- Use these as a foundation for finding solutions.

Professional Help Resources:

- Research local therapists or counselors specializing in couples therapy.
- Consider online therapy options if in-person sessions are not feasible.

Links to Additional Resources

Books:

- 'The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work' by John Gottman and Nan Silver
- 'Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love' by Dr. Sue Johnson
- 'Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life' by Marshall B. Rosenberg

Articles:

[The Importance of Conflict Resolution in Relationships](#)

[Conflict Resolution Skills](#)

[How to Use 'I' Statements](#)

Videos:

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TED Talk: The Power of Vulnerability by Brené Brown

How to Practice Active Listening

Conflict Resolution Skills: Building the Skills That Can Turn Conflicts into Opportunities