Relationship Science Online

Communication Skill Resources for Couples

Resources included are:

- **Halford (2011) speaker and listener skills**
- **Halford (2011) evaluation of communication worksheet**
- **Halford (2011) communication self-change plan worksheet**

1. **Speaker Skills**

1. *Describe specifics.* Provide clear and concrete descriptions of behaviours or situations.

2. *Express positives.* Clearly express your thoughts and feelings about the positive aspects of a situation or your partner's behaviour, even if things seem mostly negative.

3. *Assert negatives.* Without being aggressive or attacking, say directly what you dislike or want to see change.

4. *Self-disclose feelings.* Share your thoughts and feelings with your partner even if it feels difficult.

2. **Listener Skills**

5. *Attend.* Focus your attention on your partner when he or she is speaking. This includes having eye contact, facing your partner, and removing distractions (e.g., put down the newspaper, switch off the television).

6. *Encourage.* This involves saying things like "Oh," "Go on," or "I see" so your partner knows you're interested in what he or she is saying.

7. *Summarize content.* State back to your partner *in your own words* the *key points* of what he or she has just said.

8. *Paraphrase feelings.* Summarize in words the emotion your partner is expressing. Often his or her emotion will not be said in words, but will be reflected in how he or she says things, and how he or she looks.

9. *Ask questions.* Ask open-ended questions that encourage your partner to open up his or her ideas.

10. *Hear your partner out.* Let your partner finish speaking, consider what he or she said, and avoid immediately disagreeing or defending yourself. Put your own opinion on hold until later.

Halford (2011) Key speaker and listener communication skills.

On your own . . . Place a check mark in the appropriate box to describe how *you* think it went during the discussion using this key. (Don't feel that you have to have used all the 10 skills).

0	No use of this skill
1	Some use of this skill
2	OK, but could be better
3	Good use of this skill
N/A	Skill not applicable

	Skill	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**N/A**
Speaker skills	Describe specifics					
	Express positives					
	Assert negatives					
	Self-disclose feelings					
Listener skills	Attend					
	Encourage					
	Summarize content					
	Paraphrase feelings					
	Ask questions					
	Hear my partner out					

My communication strengths: _____

_____

_____

_____

Communication goals I want to work on: _____

_____

_____

_____

Halford (2011) Communication self-evaluation form.

1. DESCRIBE
Choose an aspect of your communication you'd like to work on. Describe this aspect clearly and positively (write in the spaces provided).

2. FOCUS

What do I currently do?

_____

_____

What are the **pluses** of my current behaviour?

What are the **minuses** of my current behaviour?

3. GOAL
Define as precisely as you can what you want to happen.

4. **ACT**
What will I do? Where and when will I do it?

5. EVALUATE—After you have implemented your action plan:

What did I actually do?

_____

What positives resulted?

_____

What negatives resulted?

_____

What do I need to do from here?

Halford (2011) Communication Self-change plan