

Close Companions: Online Relationship Academy

Course: Managing Stress Together

Lesson Five: Managing Relational Stress

Part 2: What To Do and What Not to Do + Steps for Dealing with Conflict

Objectives for this lesson

1. Have a clearer understanding of the causes and effects of relational stress.
2. Understand the DO's and DON'Ts of dealing with relational stress.
3. Clarify your mutual awareness of current relationship stressors and the effects they're having.
4. Establish a shared understanding of how you want to manage your shared stress.
5. Develop your conflict management skills.

What NOT to do:

- Try to change your partner
- Accumulate grievances
- Go outside appropriate relational boundaries
- Short-change your need for quality time together

What TO do:

- Prioritize your relationship
- Accept your partner's "givens"
- Work on yourself
- Learn and use healthy communication and conflict management skills
- Engage in stress-relieving activity together and separately
- Deal with stuff as it comes up
- Do relational repair work as needed
- Seek outside support if needed

Principles for Dealing with Conflict

- Cultivate a caring attitude
- Shift from a competitive mindset to a collaborative mindset
- Think process as much as outcome

Steps for Dealing with Conflict

1. Agree to a time and place
2. State the issue simply and clearly
3. Seek mutual understanding
4. Brainstorm possible solutions
5. Decide on a mutually-agreeable course of action
6. Follow through on your commitments