



 Safe Conversations®
WITH HARVILLE & HELEN



Safe Conversations with Harville & Helen

Participant Manual



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Safe Conversations[®] is a new way of talking without criticizing, listening without judgment and connecting beyond differences.

This cutting-edge relational methodology transforms polarization into connecting, relaxed joyfulness and full aliveness.

Conflict is Growth trying to happen



I - New Definition of a Relationship

A Relationship is Two People (or more!) and the Space-Between them.

**WITH SAFETY, CONNECTION HAPPENS.
WITH ANXIETY, CONNECTION IS RUPTURED.**

Anyone can restore Safety with the 4 Tools of Safe Conversations:

- 1 Structured Dialogue
- 2 Empathy
- 3 Zero Negativity
- 4 Affirmations



II - The Safe Conversations Tools

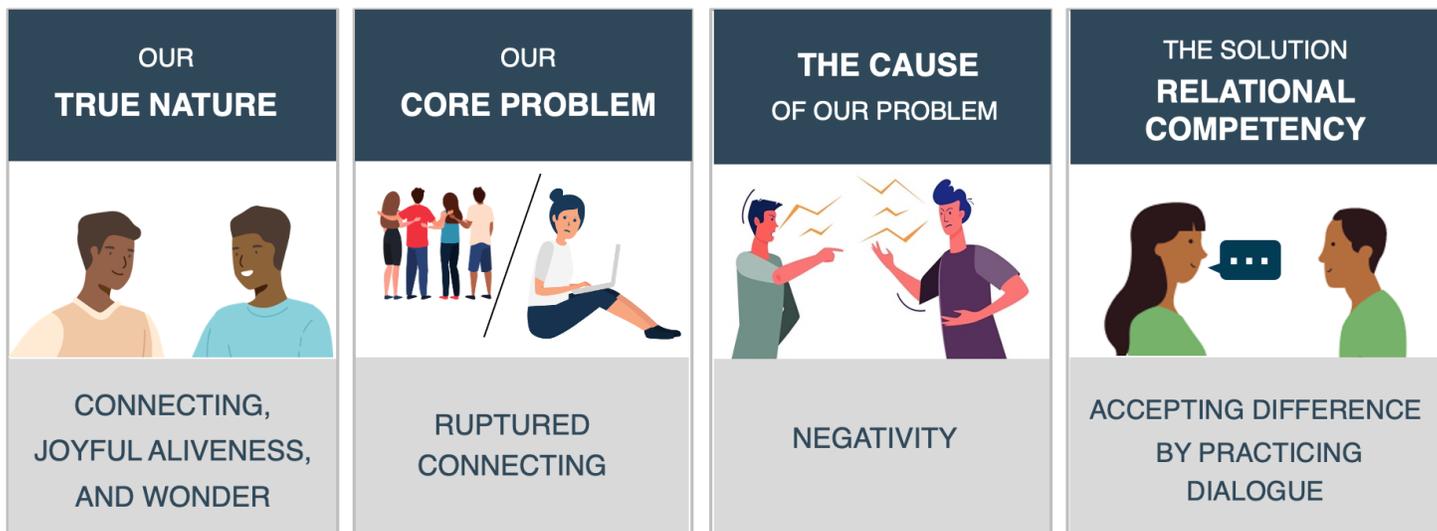
When people practice these four things, safety is restored:

- 1 Safe Conversations® Dialogue**
A three-step structured dialogue process that creates safety and connection.
- 2 Empathy**
Imagining the impact of past challenges on another person, and accepting that the past influences how one behaves in the present.
- 3 Zero Negativity**
Keep the Space-Between safe by eliminating all words, tones of voice, facial expressions and body language that communicate a “put down” to another person.
- 4 Affirmations**
Expressing appreciations, gratitude, curiosity, acceptance, showing excitement and having fun. These exchanges help create Safety in the Space-Between and sustain connecting, full aliveness, relaxed joyfulness, and wonder.



Our Core Theory

Connecting Is Being

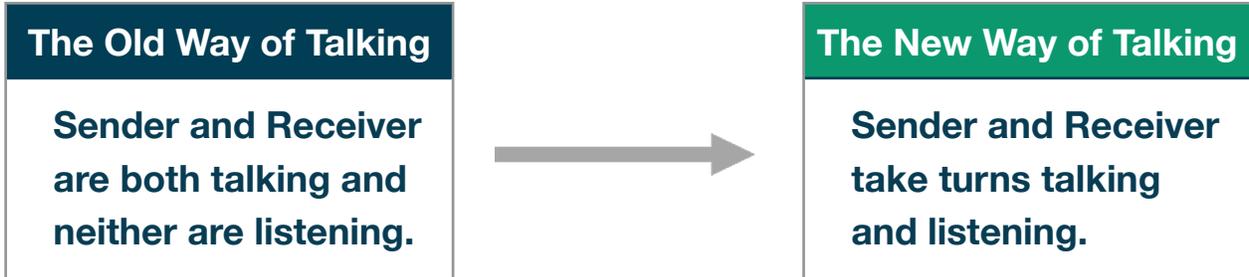


The Safe Conversations methodology is all based on Harville and Helen's fundamental core theory about the nature of humans.

- **Our True Nature:** We humans live in a connecting universe. Therefore, it is our true human nature to connect with other humans. When we are connecting, we experience joyful aliveness and wonder.
- **Our Core Problem:** Most of us had our connecting capacity ruptured in infancy and childhood, and we never learned how to restore and maintain connections.
- **The Cause of Our Problem:** Ruptured connection is the core human problem, and it is ultimately caused by Negativity. We negate others, and then they get defensive, and this cycle goes on and on.
- **The Solution is Relational Competency:** The solution to this problem is to restore connecting by accepting the fact that other people are different from you. How exactly do we do this? By learning and practicing a new way of talking and listening called Dialogue. When we consistently practice Dialogue, we build a new skill called Relational Competency - the capacity to create and maintain consistent and positive connections with others beyond difference.



III - The Structure of the Safe Conversations Dialogue



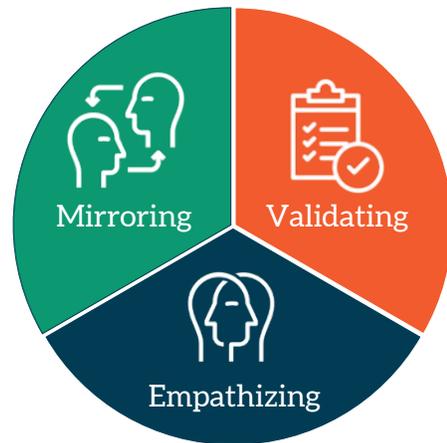
In the Safe Conversations Process:

One is the **Sender** (talks). 

 One is the **Receiver** (listens).

The Sender and Receiver take turns talking and listening while using the three step dialogue process:

- 1 Mirroring
- 2 Validating
- 3 Empathizing





The Safe Conversations Dialogue



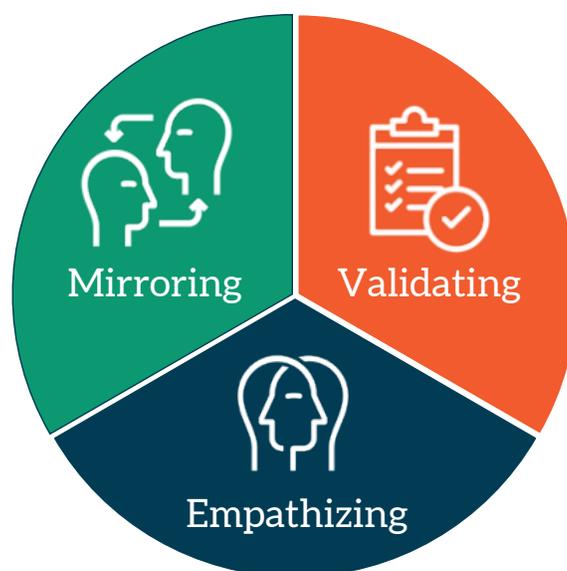
The Sender follows these simple rules:

- 1** Asks for an Appointment.
- 2** Makes eye contact without words.
- 3** Sends message in short sentences.
- 4** Uses I-language.
- 5** Makes no criticisms of partner.



The Receiver follows these simple rules:

- 1 Mirroring**
 - *Let me see if I've got it.*
 - *You said... Did I get it?*
 - *Is there more about that?*
- 2 Validating**
 - *That makes sense, and what makes sense is...*
- 3 Empathizing**
 - *I imagine you might be feeling...*
 - *Is that what you are feeling?*
 - *Are there other feelings?*





The Dialogue Process

▶ THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING AN APPOINTMENT

Honoring boundaries is essential in all relationships. When you want someone to be present and listen while you are talking, ask them “Is now a good time to talk?”

The other person may respond with a “yes.” But if they are not available at the moment, it is OK for them to delay. If you are the Receiver, set a time, as soon as possible, when you are available, and then show up at precisely that time, without having to be asked again.

Ex. ***“Is now a good time to talk about ... (our schedule, an appreciation, a frustration, an experience, etc.)?”***

▶ THE IMPORTANCE OF NON-VERBAL CONTACT

Eye contact contributes to the quality of the exchange of words.

Although we cannot consciously see the pupils of another person, our brains can tell whether they are small or large. When the brain sees a large pupil, it interprets the other as “open” and safe and relaxes its defenses. If their pupils are small, the brain interprets them as “closed” and dangerous, which activates their defenses. Open pupils facilitate sharing vulnerable feelings and thoughts; small pupils call for caution and monitored sharing.

When the appointment time is agreed upon, if both persons make eye contact and take at least three deep breaths in sync, their brains will be flooded with oxygen, which will enlarge their pupils and lower their blood pressure. Both people then begin to feel more safe and the words they exchange will be connecting rather than polarizing



► MIRRORING

In a Safe Conversation, a Sender and a Receiver alternate speaking and listening. Mirroring, the first of the three steps of a Safe Conversation, is listening accurately, reflecting the content and tone of the Sender's message. The Sender may want to be mirrored "word-for-word" or may prefer a "paraphrase" that uses the Receiver's words, but accurately reflects the Sender's message. They should designate their preference before beginning the dialogue.

SENDER RESPONSIBILITY & TIPS FOR MIRRORING

- Use I language: I feel, I need, I want. (Avoid using "You never... you always...!")
- Send all information respectfully and kindly.
- Be succinct. You will flood your partner using too many words.
- No shame, blame or criticism – NOT EVER!
- ASK for what you want. Don't tell your partner what NOT to do, or what they are doing wrong.

THE PAUSE

If at any point the Receiver is feeling "overloaded," gently raise your hand to ask for a pause and mirror back what you heard thus far.

- ***"I'm on overload. Let me see if I got it so far. You said..."***

In response, the Receiver echoes the Sender's message word for word or by paraphrasing and uses a sentence stem as follows: ***"Let me see if I've got it. You said..."***

Then the Receiver checks for accuracy by asking: ***"Did I get it?"***

If the Sender did not feel accurately mirrored, the Receiver asks the Sender to repeat the part that was missed, and they send and receive until the Sender feels fully heard.

When the Sender confirms that the Receiver mirrored everything accurately, the Receiver then asks: ***"Is there more about that?"***



USING “IS THERE MORE?”

This question expresses curiosity, a vitally important expression of interest, respect and validation.

THE SUMMARY

When there is “no more about that,” the Receiver offers a summary of all that they heard and check again for accuracy. You can respond with, **“So, in summary, I heard you say” ... or “Did I get it all?”**

▶ VALIDATING

When you validate, you cross the bridge into another person’s world, see their point of view and accept it as their “truth.” Validation is not agreement, it is acknowledgement. You can respond with: **“That makes sense, and what makes sense is...”**

▶ EMPATHIZING

And finally, you empathize and imagine what the other person feels in that moment and state what those feelings might be. You can respond with:

“And I can imagine you might be feeling...”

“Is that the feeling?”

“Are there other feelings?”

▶ CLOSURE

After all three steps are completed, the Sender and Receiver move into closure.

“Thank you for listening.” (Sender) **“Thank you for sharing.”** (Receiver)

Closure can be achieved with a hand shake or high five, or if comfortable, with a hug. Now switch roles and repeat the process.



 Safe Conversations®



IV - Dialogue Guide

Sharing an Appreciation



Sharing an Appreciation

- 1 Decide who will be the first Sender  and who will be the Receiver 
 - 2 Follow the structure and use the sentence stems precisely as indicated.
 - 3 When all the steps are completed, switch roles and repeat the process.
-

MAKING AN APPOINTMENT



I'd like to share something I appreciate about you, is now a good time?

Yes, now is a good time.



Connect Non-Verbally: Make eye contact and take a breath before beginning the dialogue.

SHARING THE APPRECIATION



The Appreciation I have for you is _____ .

Note to the Receiver:

If at any point in the dialogue you get overloaded, raise your hand and say: "I'd like to Mirror you back so far."



MIRRORING FOR ACCURACY

Mirrors

Let me see if I've got it.
You said you appreciate that I _____.



Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?



Verifies Accuracy



Yes, you got it.
- or -
The part you got was _____ and I also said _____.

Receiver continues to Mirror Sender until the Sender confirms the Receiver "got it."

Shows Curiosity

Is there more about that?



Yes. When you do that / when I see that in you,
I feel _____.

Mirrors

Let me see if I've got it. You said when I do that / when
you see that in me, you feel _____.





Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?



Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.

- or -

The part you got was _____ and I also said _____.



Continue the process until the Sender agrees the Receiver “got it.”

SUMMARIZING

Summarizes

Let me see if I got it all. You appreciate that I _____.

When you experience that, you feel _____.



Checks for Accuracy

Is that a good summary? Did I get it all?”



Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.

- or -

The part you got was _____ and I also said _____.





CLOSING



Thank you for listening, and receiving this Appreciation.

Thank you for sharing the Appreciation.



Give each other a handshake or high five, or with an intimate partner give each other a one minute hug.

When all the steps are completed, switch roles and repeat the process.



V - Empathy

Relational challenges from our past inevitably show up in our present relationships. Challenges may have been experienced in childhood, associated with our caretakers who have been either intrusive and overbearing or neglectful and absent. Or, they may be more recent challenges, issues or events experienced in adulthood. Memories of past challenges may increase in intensity over time, or create persistent frustrations that inhibit our ability to connect with others in every part of our life.

We're able to Empathize with another person when we take the time to imagine how their past challenges are impacting their current behaviors and needs.

We've developed a set of exercises to help you and your partner identify the specific needs and behaviors that resulted from past challenges. These exercises are included in the *Current Need and Past Challenge Dialogue Guide* in Appendix A on page 28.

Empathy Sentence Stems

“And I can imagine you might be feeling...”

“Is that your feeling?”

“Are there other feelings?”



VI - Zero Negativity

“Negativity” is any transaction another person experiences as a “put down.” It can be words, a tone of voice, an eye roll that communicates criticism, shame, or blame. It may be intentional or accidental, but in all cases, a “put down” ruptures connection.

Whoever reports experiencing a “put down” is the judge of whether or not it is “Negative.” If they say it was negative, it was negative! Negativity triggers anxiety in which we anticipate potentially catastrophic outcomes from current and future Negativity. Having entered the scene of universal human suffering, our defenses go on line and our interactions become strategic and tactical rather than relational and collaborative.

Immediate repair of the rupture replaces the activation of adrenalin and cortisol (the neurochemicals of fear) with endorphins and dopamine (the neurochemicals of Safety).

THE ZERO NEGATIVITY CHALLENGE

We invite you to take the Zero Negativity Challenge and sign the Zero Negativity Pledge.

The Zero Negativity Pledge means you will refrain from giving a “put down.” You can still express painful feelings or deal with problems. In fact, when you remove negative energy from your conversations, you will be able to deal more efficiently with painful feelings and relational issues because they are not overloaded by a negative charge.

Your signature means that you have committed to practicing Zero Negativity (ZN) for the next 30 days.



Zero Negativity Pledge

I pledge to make my relationships a Zone of Zero Negativity for the next 30 days by omitting words, tones, or body language that could be experienced as a “put-down,” thus rupturing connection with others.

If I experience a rupture, I will immediately send a gentle signal (bing, ouch, wow, oops!) to communicate that I have experienced a “put-down,” and then use the Repair Process to restore Safety and connecting.

SIGNED _____

DATE _____



Zero Negativity Reconnecting Process

Okay, you've taken the pledge.

Here are some guidelines if you experience a “put-down”.

- 1** If you experience a put-down, give a gentle signal like bing, ouch, wow, oops.
- 2** Then select the reconnecting process that would restore connection for you and engage your partner in the process until you feel connected.
- 3** There are various options to help the Repair Process:
 - Offer a re-do. Take time out, start over, and re-do the transaction. Ask how you might resend the message so it is not experienced as a “put down”.
 - Offer a reconnecting behavior, a single behavior like an apology, flowers, or a hug.
 - If the rupture needs more attention, request a Safe Conversations dialogue.
- 4** Conclude the reconnecting process with an appreciation or a caring behavior.

REPAIRING A NEGATIVE

The relational sciences say that 5 positives are required to repair 1 negative. If someone says they experienced a “put down,” keep this ratio in mind, and consider offering them 5 Affirmations!



Tracking Zero Negativity

According to research, achieving sustainable change requires daily repetition of a core change activity for at least 21-30 days. Since Zero Negativity (along with using the structured Safe Conversations dialogue and practicing regular Affirmations) is the foundation of relationships, we invite you to commit to the Zero Negativity Pledge for 30 days.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1** Keep in mind that you pledged to keep your relationship free of negativity. You are tracking negativity in your relationships, not assessing the value.
- 2** Create a calendar and place it where you can see it, like your bathroom mirror.
- 3** At the end of each day, draw a “smiley face” on the calendar if you have successfully practiced Zero Negativity. If not, draw a “frowning face” on the day. It’s OK! Zero Negativity is a process.
- 4** Share Appreciations regularly. With your partner or family members, commit to offering an Appreciation before you go to bed. End your day with Zero Negativity, and you will start tomorrow the same.



VII - Affirmations

Affirmations are words and behaviors that acknowledge the “being” of another person. Affirmations may be given by you to another person or received by you from another person. They are given spontaneously--not in response to a request or with an expectation of reciprocity.

When an Affirmation is **GIVEN**, it is an “Appreciation” that acknowledges and raises the value of another. When an Affirmation is **RECEIVED**, it is a “caring behavior” and makes the receiver feel valued and cared about. Affirming the “being” of others empowers them to be themselves, and acknowledging and receiving Affirmations from others empowers them to experience their ability to make an impact.

Remember: What you focus on is what you get.

The more GOOD you focus on, the more good you will get!



VIII - Our Amazing Brain

In the past, the Brain was considered a fixed organ, but with the study of Neuroplasticity, we realize the Brain is always changing and growing.

To understand how to have healthy relationships, it is helpful to understand how the Brain works.

In Safe Conversations, we think about the Brain as having 2 Parts:

Higher Brain

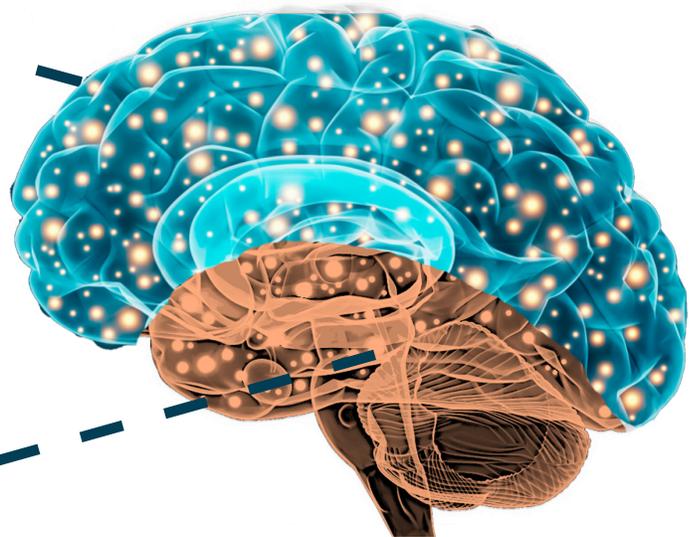
WHERE YOU THINK
“I UNDERSTAND YOU”

- Organizes Data
- Generates New Ideas
- Creates Win-Wins

Lower Brain

WHERE YOU REACT
“FIGHT OR FLIGHT”

- Keeps you Alive
- Spontaneous Action Without Thinking

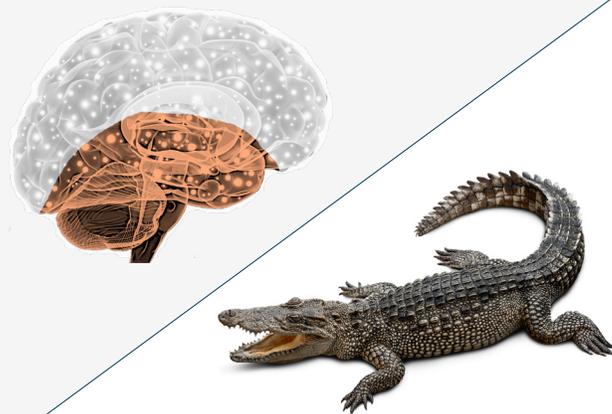




The Crocodile And Owl

**SAFE CONVERSATIONS CREATES A HEALTHY BRAIN
WHICH CREATES HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS!**

When we feel reactive, we are stuck in our lower, reactive, Crocodile brain

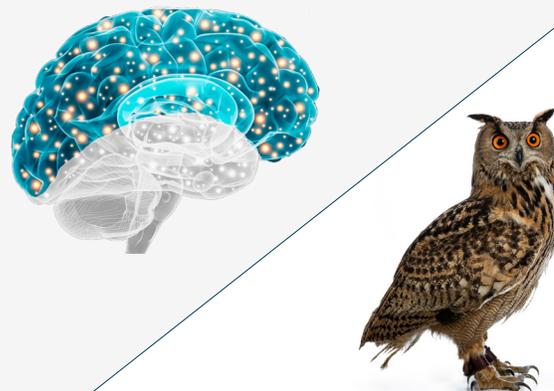


When, we use the structure of Safe Conversations...

Let me see if I got that...
Did I get it?
Is there more about that?



... We move into our higher (Wise Owl) brain





IX - Congratulations

HOORAY! You have just taken a giant step toward building joy and connection in your relationships. Here are 4 simple reminders to help practice the Safe Conversations skills you've learned and unleash the potential in the world around you.

EVERYDAY GUIDELINES

1 USE THE SAFE CONVERSATIONS IDEAS, TOOLS AND SENTENCE STEMS

- Take turns talking.
- Take turns listening.

In a Safe Conversation Dialogue:

- Sender asks: ***“Is now a good time to talk?”***
- Receiver says: (Mirroring) ***“Let me see if I’ve got it...”***
(Validating) ***“You make sense.”***
(Empathizing) ***“I can imagine you feel...”***

2 SEEK TO COMMIT TO ZERO NEGATIVITY

- Relationships need Safety to thrive.
- Negativity destroys Safety.
- It’s not about what you say, it’s how you say it.

Take the Zero Negativity Challenge and remove all “put downs” from your interactions. Pledge a life of Zero Negativity!



3 GIVE DAILY AFFIRMATIONS

- It is a gift you can give every day.
- It doesn't cost a dime!
- Sharing appreciations makes both of you feel **WONDERFUL**.

4 TRAIN YOUR HIGHER BRAIN

- When talking with others, respond from the higher brain instead of reacting from the lower brain.
- You can train your brain! The Safe Conversations Process brings the higher brain online.

And remember to use SENDER RESPONSIBILITY:

- Use I-language. (I feel, I need, I want...)
- Send all information positively, respectfully, and kindly!
- No shame, blame or criticism – **NOT EVER!**
- Ask for what you want

If you do all this, you will have kept your pledge to **ZERO NEGATIVITY!**



X - Additional Support & Training

Some days you will feel fully alive and experience the wonder of being! Until you integrate all these processes into your relationships and all of your life, you may have days when you feel pretty awful. That's the thing about learning new skills – it's often two steps forward, one step back.

When you feel discouraged, be gentle with yourself. Remind yourself that you're learning new skills. If you find that you're having more bad moments than good, you don't have to go it alone. There is a network of counselors and therapists around the world who have been specifically trained in working with couples in Imago Relational Therapy. A session with them will help you deepen the process.

For more information about the Safe Conversations workshops, products and Leader Training, please visit www.safeconversations.com.



 Safe Conversations®



XI - Dialogue Guide

Current Need and Past Challenge



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PAST

The needs we have in all of our relationships inevitably stem from experiences we had in the past. They could be distant memories or recent challenges, either way, the past has a powerful impact on our bids for connection in current relationships.

Our relationship needs show up in many ways. There may be a pattern or a regularity. For example, we may need to arrive at the airport hours in advance triggered by memories of late or chaotic travel in our youth. Or needs may increase in intensity over time. What may have been a minor frustration in earlier years could become untenable as we get older. Exploring how the past impacts current relationships helps us ask for what we want or need to be safe and connected, in every part of our lives.

The Current Need and Past Challenge Dialogue is a structured guide for creating connection instead of rupture when we articulate our needs, and leads to empathy and respect for one another - our intimate partners, family members, peers and colleagues.



THINKING ABOUT WHAT WE NEED

Before having a dialogue about relationship needs, think about **the need you experience in your most significant relationship**. This need could apply to a significant other, a family member, friend or colleague.

Study the list below and select and circle one of the needs you currently experience. If needed, you may expand with notes in the space provided.

The Relationship Need I Experience is:

- To be free to do what I want to do with my time
- To be trusted by others for my thinking and my decisions
- To have my emotional and physical boundaries honored when I set them
- To experience recognition and appreciation for my perspective
- To experience what I do being valued by others
- To experience interest in what I am talking about
- To be asked for my opinion on subjects being discussed
- To be included when plans are being made
- To experience others being curious about my experiences in life
- To be valued for who I am as well as what I do

Notes:



HOW THE PAST IMPACTS THE RELATIONSHIP NEED

Associating a past challenge or experience with a current relationship need is a powerful way of connecting with those who can help fulfill our needs.

Understanding and sharing what has occurred in our life to trigger a need is a pathway to Validation and Empathy - the key elements for safety and connection.

Study the list below, and circle the past challenge that best describes what triggered the need you identified on the previous page. If needed, you may expand with notes in the space provided.

The Past Challenge that Triggered my Need is:

- Experiencing being controlled by others
- Being told what to think and how to express my thoughts
- Being told what and how to feel
- Experiencing my thoughts and feelings as not important to others
- Being told what to do and how to do it
- Feeling invisible, unseen and unvalued
- Feeling abandoned and alone
- Experiencing myself as insignificant
- Receiving no support for what I thought and felt
- Feeling that what I wanted and liked was uninteresting to others

Notes:



RELATIONSHIP COPING STRATEGIES

MAXIMIZERS AND MINIMIZERS

Relationship needs and the memories that trigger them often create anxiety and lack of safety. We begin operating in the lower brain and adopt natural coping strategies that either MAXIMIZE or MINIMIZE our energy, as a matter of self-protection.

In Safe Conversations, we call these adaptations Hailstorms (*Maximizers*) and Turtles (*Minimizers*). Because our coping strategies effect how we relate to others - and they to us - it is helpful to identify our tendency.

Study the descriptions below and circle the one you think best describes you.

MAXIMIZER (Hail Storm)

When I get upset, I tend to:

- Express myself with passion and energy, using many words
- Repeat myself and interrupt others
- Feel an intense need for a response
- Express many needs and listen poorly
- Adopt a victim stance

MINIMIZER (Turtle)

When I get upset, I tend to:

- Feel tight inside and do not verbalize my emotions
- Adopt an “I’ll take care of myself/I don’t need anyone” attitude
- Express very few, if any, needs and exclude others from my personal space
- Listen poorly and attempt to figure things out by myself
- Remove myself from my relationships without explanation



SHARING A CURRENT RELATIONSHIP NEED AND PAST CHALLENGE

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1 Use the exercises on pages 30, 31 and 32 to prepare for this dialogue.
- 2 Decide who will be the first Sender 
and who will be the Receiver 
- 3 Follow the structure and use the sentence stems precisely as indicated.
- 4 When all the steps are completed, switch roles and repeat the process.

MAKING AN APPOINTMENT



I would like to have a conversation about a Relationship Need I have (*at home, at work or in my community*). Are you available now?

Yes, I'm available now.



Connect Non-Verbally: Make eye contact and take a breath before beginning the dialogue.



SHARE AN APPRECIATION



Before I start, I would like to share an appreciation.
I appreciate that you _____ (*something special or important about the Receiver*).

Note to the Receiver: If at any point in the dialogue you get overloaded, raise your hand and say: "I'd like to Mirror you back so far."

Mirrors

Let me see if I got it. You appreciate that I _____



Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?



Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.



Thanks for sharing that.



Thanks for receiving it.





SHARING A RELATIONSHIP NEED



Now I'd like to tell you about a relationship need I have *(at home, at work or in my community)*. This need is ____ *(the need circled on page 30)*.

Mirrors the Need

Let me see if I've got it. You shared that the Relationship Need you have *(at home, at work or in your community)* is ____.



Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?



Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.
- or -
Yes, and I also said ____.



Shows Curiosity

Is there more you'd like to say about this Relationship Need?



Receiver continues mirroring, checking for accuracy and asking "Is there more?" until the Sender is ready to move on.

SHARING A PAST CHALLENGE OR EXPERIENCE



This Relationship Need reminds me of a challenge I had in my past *(recent or distant)* which is ____ *(the Past Challenge circled on page 31)*.



Mirrors

Let me see if I've got it. The Relationship Need you have reminds you of a past challenge which is ____.



Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?



Verifies Accuracy



Yes, you got it.
- or -
Yes, and I also said ____.

Shows Curiosity

Is there more about that?



Receiver continues Mirroring, checking for accuracy and asking "Is there more?" until the Sender says: "There is no more."



When I remember this, it makes me feel (*sensations, feelings, emotions*), and I respond as a Maximizer – *or* – Minimizer by doing ____.

Mirrors

Let me see if I've got that. When you remember this past challenge, you feel ____, and you respond as a Maximizer – *or* – Minimizer by doing ____.





Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.
- or -
Yes, and I also said ____.

Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?



Shows Curiosity

Is there more about that?



Receiver continues Mirroring, checking for accuracy and asking "Is there more?" until the Sender says: "There is no more."

EXPRESSING HOW THE NEED COULD BE MET



One way I'd like my Relationship Need to be met is ____.
This would allow me to do/think/act ____.

Mirrors

Let me see if I got that. One way you'd like your Relationship Need to be met is ____.
This would allow you to do/think/act ____.



Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?





Verifies Accuracy



Yes, you got it.
- or -
Yes, and I also said ____.

Shows Curiosity

Is there more about that?



Receiver continues Mirroring, checking for accuracy and asking “Is there more?” until the Sender says: “There is no more.”

SUMMARIZING

Let me see if I got all of that. You are experiencing a need in your relationships (*at home, work on in community*) which is ____.

This Relationship Need reminds you of ____ (*challenge in the past*). And it makes you feel ____ and you respond as a Maximizer – or – Minimizer by doing ____.

One way you’d like your Relationship Need to be met is ____ . This would allow you to do/think/act ____.



Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it all?



Verifies Accuracy



Yes, you got it.
- or -
Yes, and I also said ____.



VALIDATING

You make sense! What makes sense is that the Relationship Need you have, which is ____reminds you of ____.
 And it makes sense that this memory causes you to Maximize *or* Minimize by doing ____.



Checks for Accuracy

Is that a good validation?



Sender: Confirms the validation. If anything was not validated, asks to send that part again.

EMPATHIZING

Expresses Empathy

I can imagine that if your Relationship Need, which is _____ was met by _____ (*new actions or behaviors*), you would feel _____ (*glad, happy, fulfilled joyful, etc*).



Checks for Accuracy

Is that your feeling?
 Are there other feelings?





Verifies Accuracy



Yes.
- or -
Yes, I'd also feel.

CLOSING

Thank you for sharing all that with me.



Thank you for listening.

Give each other a handshake or high five, or with an intimate partner give each other a one minute hug.

When all the steps are completed, switch roles and repeat the process.



 Safe Conversations®



XI - Dialogue Guide

Sharing a Frustration and a Desired Change



Sharing a Frustration and a Desired Change

- 1 Decide who will be the first Sender 
and who will be the Receiver 
- 2 Follow the structure and use the sentence stems precisely as indicated.
- 3 When all the steps are completed, switch roles and repeat the process.

I - MAKING AN APPOINTMENT



I would like to talk about a frustration I experience.
Is now a good time for you?

Yes, now is a good time.



Connect Non-Verbally: Make eye contact and take a breath before beginning the dialogue.

II - EXPRESSING AN APPRECIATION



First, I would like to give you an Appreciation.
I appreciate that _____ *(something special or important about the Receiver).*

Note to the Receiver: If at any point in the dialogue you get overloaded, raise your hand and say: "I'd like to Mirror you back so far."



Mirrors and Checks for Accuracy

If I got that, you appreciate that I ____.
Did I get it?



Verifies Accuracy



Yes, you got it.

Thank you for sharing that.



Thanks for receiving it.

III - DESCRIBING A FRUSTRATION



Now I'd like to tell you about a frustration I experience
(in my close relationships, workplace or community).
I am frustrated when I experience _____
(frustrating behavior).

Mirrors

Let me see if I've got it.
You said the frustration you experience is _____.



Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?





Verifies Accuracy



Yes, you got it.
- or -
The part you got was _____ and I also said _____.

Shows Curiosity

Is there more about that?



Receiver continues Mirroring, checking for accuracy and asking “Is there more?” until the Sender says: “There is no more.”



When I experience that frustration,
I feel _____ (*angry, sad, scared, etc.*)

Mirrors

If I got that, when you experience that
frustration, you feel _____.



Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?



IV - CONNECTING TO PAST EXPERIENCE



Yes, you got it. And when I feel _____, I remember
a time in the past when I experienced a similar frustrating
behavior when _____ (*a past event*) happened.



Mirrors

If I got that, when you feel ____ it reminds you of ____
(a past experience triggered by the frustration)



Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?



Verifies Accuracy



Yes, you got it.
- or -
The part you got was _____ and I also said _____.

Shows Curiosity

Is there more about that?



Receiver continues Mirroring, checking for accuracy and asking “Is there more?” until the Sender says: “There is no more.”

V - SHARING DESIRED CHANGE



When I experience _____ *(the frustrating behavior)*,
what I really want is _____ *(a different and positive behavior)*.



Mirrors

If I got that, instead of _____ (*the frustrating behavior*), what you really want is _____ (*a different and positive behavior*).



Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?



Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.
- or -
The part you got was _____ and I also said _____.



Receiver continues Mirroring, checking for accuracy and asking "Is there more?" until the Sender says: "There is no more."

VI - SUMMARIZING

Let me see if I got all of that. In summary, the frustration you experience is _____.
When you experience that frustration, you feel _____.
And when you have that feeling, you are reminded of _____.
Instead, what you really want is _____.



Checks for Accuracy

Is that a good summary, did I get it all?





Verifies Accuracy



Yes, you got it all.
- or -
The part you got was _____ and I also said _____.

VII - VALIDATING

Validates

You make sense!
What makes sense is that experiencing _____ (*the frustration*) reminds you of _____ (*past experience*).
And it makes sense that it makes you feel _____.



Checks for Accuracy

Is that a good validation?



Sender: Confirms the Validation. If anything was not validated, asks to send that part again.

VIII - EMPATHIZING

I can imagine that if you had what you really want which is _____, you would feel _____ (*happy, joyful, excited, etc*).





Checks for Accuracy

Is that your feeling?
Are there other feelings?



Verifies Accuracy

Yes.
- or -
I'd also feel.



VIII - CLOSING

Thank you for sharing all that with me.



Thank you for listening.



Give each other a handshake or high five, or with an intimate partner give each other a one minute hug.

When all the steps are completed, switch roles and repeat the process.