

Chapter 5 Resources: Effective Communication Strategies for Couples

Worksheet: Communication Style Snapshot

This exercise is designed to help you reflect on your current communication patterns and how they affect emotional connection, conflict resolution, and overall relationship dynamics, by identifying helpful versus unhelpful tendencies. Circle the response that best describes your typical behavior (and optionally, your partner’s) in each situation:

Question	Your Style	Partner’s Style (<i>optional</i>)
When conflict arises, I tend to:	Avoid Engage React Reflect	
I feel heard when my partner:	Listens silently Asks questions Fixes the problem Validates me	
I often respond to good news by:	Say “Cool!” Ask questions Change the subject Point out risks	
During texting disagreements, I usually:	Withdraw Over-explain Keep messaging Suggest an in-person talk	
When misunderstood, I tend to:	Get frustrated Stay quiet Clarify Apologize	

Reflection:

- Which of your patterns tend to build connection and understanding? _____

- Which responses might unintentionally create distance or tension? _____

- Is there one behavior you’d like to experiment with changing? _____

Optional Therapist Prompt (*for clinical work*):

- Use this snapshot to start a discussion about communication habits under stress vs. calm, and how partners interpret and respond to each other’s signals. Encourage both partners to reflect on what helps them feel emotionally safe and understood.