WYLDE COLLECTIVE

modern mental healthcare for all

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM, NOT THE PERSON

When conflict arises, focus on the facts and the problem, not your partner's character. Attacking them only fuels more conflict and defensiveness.

USE "I" STATEMENTS

Start your sentences with "I" to share your feelings without blaming.
For example, say "I feel hurt when you don't share your plans"
instead of blaming statements.

USE REFLECTIVE LISTENING

We've all talked "at" our partner instead of "with" them. Reflecting back what they say shows you're truly listening and understanding their feelings.

TAKE A TIME OUT

Knowing when to pause and take a break is key in handling conflict. It helps both partners calm down and improves communication.

FOCUS ON A RESOLUTION

Arguing just to argue rarely helps. Focus on finding a solution or compromise you both agree on to move forward.

HEALTHY VS UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

A healthy relationship accepts each person as they are, flaws and all. It respects each partner's independence and their interests outside the relationship. Communication is open and honest, creating a safe space to share thoughts and feelings. Decisions are made equally, with both voices valued. Healthy boundaries are respected, and compromise is part of the process. Most importantly, there is mutual respect at all times.

UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

An unhealthy relationship often lacks respectful communication and trust, sometimes leading to dishonesty or infidelity. One partner's needs, feelings, and thoughts may be dismissed, leaving them feeling unsupported and isolated. Boundaries are often missing, and conflict may involve yelling, name-calling, or even violence. The relationship can feel unstable or unpredictable and may include controlling or abusive behavior.



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP RITUALS

All relationships need care to grow—especially the one with your partner. Life gets busy, but making time to be present together is essential. One simple way to reconnect is by creating a healthy relationship ritual. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

COMING & GOING

Create a daily ritual for leaving and coming home to connect, share, and show affection.

EVENING WALK

Take a mindful walk together after dinner. Keep it short but stay present, notice sights and sounds, and share what you observe.

LEARN TOGETHER

Choose a book, podcast, or other media to enjoy separately, then come together to discuss and share your thoughts.

MICRO DATE

Choose one day a week for a date, even if it's just 20 minutes. Dedicate that time to a fun activity together, no matter how busy life gets.

SHARE A MEAL

Every day, share at least one meal together—whether it's a main meal or afternoon tea. Sit down peacefully, without rushing or distractions.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY

Whether your relationship is new or long-term but feels distant, exploring your wants, needs, and experiences can deepen your connection. Below are categories with questions to help you get to know each other better.

THE FUN THINGS

- What was your favourite show or movie as a child?
- Where is your dream destination for a holiday?
- What is your favourite song?
- Have you ever read a book that changed your outlook on life? If yes, what was the book?
- If you could only pick one movie to watch again, what movie would you pick?
- What is your happiest childhood memory?

ABOUT US

- When did you realise that you were first interested in me?
- What do you want our relationship to look like in 5 years time?
- What motivates you to work on our relationship?
- When do you feel the happiest in our relationship?
- What is your favourite thing to do together?
- What do I say or do that makes you feel seen and connected?
- If there was one thing you could change in our relationship, what would this be?

HOPES & DREAMS

- How do you see yourself in 5 years time? What about 20 years?
- What are your top three goals to achieve in life?
- If you would wake up tomorrow with no problems or 'have to's', what would you like to do first with your free time?
- What are your top five bucket list experiences?
- What is your biggest goal for yourself in relation to work?
- If money was not an issue, what would you choose to do for work? Would you work at all?

EMOTIONS

- What are the situations in your life that frighten you the most?
- What are the situations in your life that excite you the most?
- How have you been feeling as a whole over the past two weeks?
- What is your favourite thing to do to relax?
- What is one thing that can put a smile on your face no matter what?
- Do you consider yourself to be a happy person? Why or why not?
- What makes you feel most connected emotionally to people in your life?

CONNECTEDNESS WITH OTHERS

- Outside our relationship, who do you feel most comfortable going to with your problems or to seek support?
- What is your longest friendship? How have you managed to maintain the friendship for the period you have?
- Who do you feel the closest to in your family?
- When feeling upset do you prefer to spend time alone or with others?
- Outside of our relationship, who are you most excited about telling good news to?

SHOWING GRATITUDE

Many relationships start full of affirmations, but gratitude can fade over time. Showing appreciation is key to a healthy relationship. Here are simple ways to practice gratitude:

- Give compliments and listen fully when your partner shares about their day.
- Surprise them with a fun activity, unplanned date, or thoughtful gift.
- Go above and beyond when they ask for help to show you care.
- Help them relax after a stressful day with a bath, massage, or calming music.
- Use eye contact, positive facial expressions, and touch to stay connected.

> *The more you practice gratitude, the more you see how much there is to be grateful for."* — Unknown

Practicing gratitude can cultivate a more positive and appreciative outlook on your relationships and your life. By actively seeking and acknowledging things to be grateful for, we become more aware of the qualities we appreciate the most.

VALUES- GUIDED ACTIONS

Values-guided actions are key to a healthy relationship. Small words and deeds help your partner feel loved and valued. Need ideas? Check these out.

WORDS	GESTURES	PHYSICAL
"I love you"	Cooking dinner	Giving your partner a hug or kiss
"I'm here for you"	Organizing a date night out	Holding hands when out in public
"Let me know how I can be of support"	Sharing the burden of chores at home	Stroking their hair
"I appreciate you"	Bringing home a treat or small gift	Offering a back rub
"Thank you for what you do for us"	Make a cup of coffee or tea for your partner	Sitting together on the couch
"I'm grateful for all you do"	Take part in their hobbies/interests	Maintaining open body language
"I'm sorry"	Organizing/planning the day ahead	Show active listening through eye contact

ATTACHMENT STYLES EXPLAINED

WHAT ARE ATTACHMENT STYLES?

Attachment styles explain how and why people think and behave in relationships, often stemming from early experiences with parents or caregivers.

These styles can persist into adulthood and become more noticeable in intimate relationships. The four main styles are: secure, anxious, avoidant, and anxious-avoidant.

TYPES OF ATTACHMENT STYLES (IN SHORT)

- **Secure:** Trusting, confident, and open in relationships.
- **Anxious:** Fearful of rejection and commitment, craving intimacy and validation.
- **Avoidant:** Aloof and disconnected, uncomfortable with openness in relationships.
- **Anxious-Avoidant:** A blend of anxious and avoidant traits.

WHY LEARN ABOUT ATTACHMENT STYLES?

Learning about your current attachment style can be a powerful tool in building a healthy, long term relationship. It helps you understand your needs, triggers, and patterns, and why you react the way you do in emotional situations.

It also gives you insight into your partner's behavior, creating more empathy and better communication. This awareness can reduce conflict, build deeper emotional connection, and promote healthier, more secure relationships.

In short, it's like getting a roadmap to better love and connection.

SECURE ATTACHMENT

WHAT IS IT?

The secure attachment style reflects confidence, trust, open communication, and intimacy. Individuals with this style maintain healthy boundaries while comfortably expressing their thoughts, needs, and wants to their partner.

CAUSES OF SECURE ATTACHMENT

Secure attachment is the ideal in parent-child and later intimate relationships. It develops through a balance of encouragement and independence in childhood, combined with nurturing care from parents or caregivers.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Common signs of secure attachment in both childhood and adulthood look like:

Children

- Confidently engages in independent activities.
- Seeks comfort from caregivers when needed.
- Greets their return with positive emotions.
- Prefers parents over strangers.

Adults

- Have trusting and long-lasting relationships.
- Possess good self-esteem.
- Share thoughts and feelings comfortably with close people.
- Confidently seek social support.

ANXIOUS ATTACHMENT

WHAT IS IT?

The anxious attachment style involves low trust and fear of abandonment, leading to worry about commitment and hesitation to share feelings or needs.

CAUSES OF ANXIOUS ATTACHMENT

Anxious attachment often develops when parents or caregivers are unavailable physically or emotionally during childhood, with neglect or prolonged separation being key factors.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Common signs of anxious attachment in both childhood and adulthood look like:

Children

- Might be wary of and cautious around strangers.
- May become highly distressed when a parent or caregiver leaves.
- Often will not experience a sense of comfort when parents return, but may instead seem watchful and on edge.

Adults

- Often worry about their partners commitment and experience low levels of trust.
- Can have lower self-esteem.
- Might require frequent validation.
- Experience extreme emotions when a relationship ends.

AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT

WHAT IS IT?

The avoidant attachment style involves withdrawal, difficulty with intimacy, and challenges in long-term relationships.

CAUSES OF AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT

Avoidant attachment often arises when parents or caregivers fail to meet a child's emotional needs, either through unavailability, unresponsiveness, or discouraging outward emotional expressions.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Common signs of avoidant attachment in both childhood and adulthood look like:

Children

- Might avoid their parents.
- Rarely seeks contact with parents, and refrains from seeking comfort with their parents or caregiver.
- Show little, or no preference over their parents in the presence of strangers.

Adults

- May struggle with intimacy and commitment.
- Will often invest very little in to their relationships.
- Are unwilling (or unable) to share their thoughts, feelings, wants and needs with their partner.

ANXIOUS-AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT

WHAT IS IT?

The anxious-avoidant attachment style blends anxious and avoidant tendencies, leading to conflicting desires for closeness and intimacy while often withdrawing and investing little in relationships.

CAUSES OF ANXIOUS-AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT

Anxious-avoidant attachment often stems from growing up with parents or caregivers displaying frightening behaviors, such as abuse or inconsistency due to mental illness, substance use, or alcohol use.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Common signs of anxious-avoidant attachment in both children and adults look like:

Children

- Display a combination of anxious and avoidant behaviors.
- May take on a "parental role" later in life, acting as a caregiver to their parent.

Adults

- Experience conflicting feelings, craving closeness and intimacy but withdrawing due to fear of rejection.
- Become overwhelmed when getting "too" close and may retreat.
- Display a mix of anxious and avoidant attachment traits.

POSITIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

OARS stands for open-ended questions, affirming, reflective listening, and summarising—four key skills for building strong, healthy communication. Here are examples for each to help you practise and improve.

OARS	QUESTION/STATEMENT
OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS	How can I help you with...?
	Help me understand...?
	How are you feeling?
	How would you like things to be different?
	Can you tell me more about that?
	What have you tried before to make this change?
AFFIRMATIONS	I appreciate that you are willing to talk with me today.
	It sounds like you handled yourself really well in that situation.
	It seems like you have some great skills and resources available to you.
	That's a good suggestion.
	I think anyone in your position experiencing what you have been through would find this very difficult.
	I've very much enjoyed speaking to you today.
REFLECTIVE LISTENING	So you feel...
	It sounds like you...
	So you're wondering if....
	What you experienced was....
	You feel... because...
	You experience...
SUMMARIES	Let me see if I understand so far....,
	Do I understand correctly that...
	Here is what I've heard... Let me know if I have missed anything.

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

WHAT IT IS

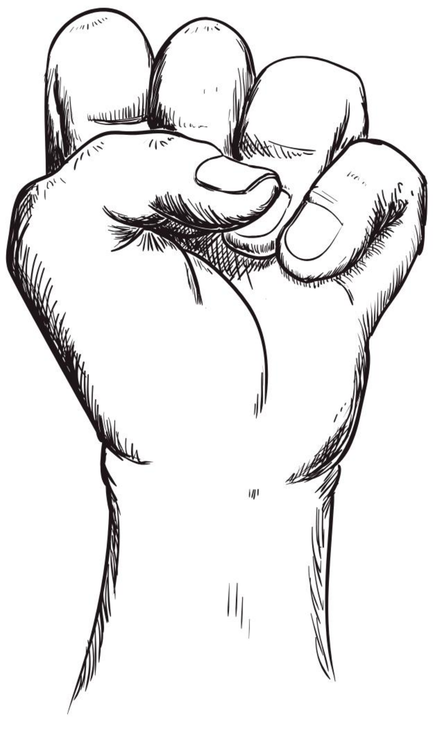
Assertive communication means clearly expressing your needs while also respecting others, without being aggressive or passive.

TRAITS OF ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATORS

Assertive communicators clearly express their needs, use confident eye contact, listen without interrupting, speak calmly, have open body language, and communicate their message clearly.

ASSERTIVENESS TIPS

Know what you want and express it clearly, while also listening to others.
Respect yourself by staying calm—avoid yelling or name-calling.
Plan ahead and be clear about what you're asking for.
Set boundaries and remember it's okay to say “no.”



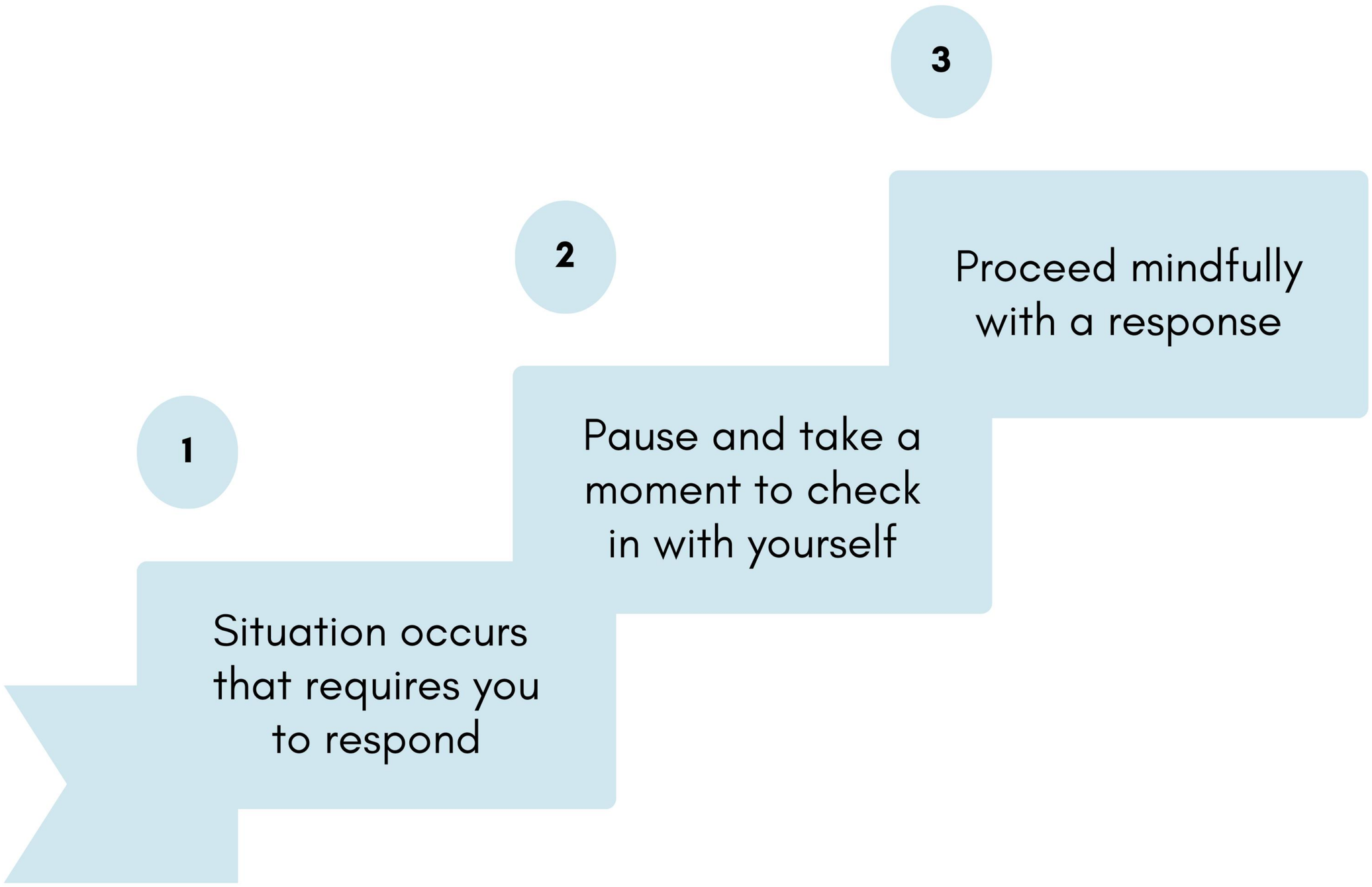
REACTING VS RESPONDING

Reacting is impulsive and emotional, while responding is thoughtful and deliberate, leading to different outcomes.

REACTING	RESPONDING
Instant and emotion driven	Has to be learnt and purposefully practised
Based on prejudices, stereotypes and personal past experiences	Requires self-awareness, self-regulation, mindfulness and empathy
Done without thinking of the consequences	Falls in line with the core values of the individual
May have a positive or negative impact based on the situation	Weighs the pros and cons of the affect on the other person/persons
Impulsive and aggressive in nature	Has a positive impact
Leads to poor communication	Calm and well thought through in nature

RESPONDING

Responding instead of reacting fosters positive communication, while helping regulate and validate emotions.



1. Is there a difference between the partner you aspire to be and your current behavior? What is holding you back from aligning with your values?

2. Pause before responding, assess your internal and external state, validate your emotions, check the facts (e.g., are you catastrophizing or overly negative?), and choose the most helpful approach.

3. Respond thoughtfully, staying true to your values while respecting both your own and others' emotions and needs.

CHECK IN BEFORE RESPONDING

Pause to reflect on your emotions, needs, and triggers before responding. Use the guide questions below to navigate uncertainty and respond with intention.

What is happening right now? What are the actual facts of what is happening?

What emotions am I feeling right now?

Is there something that is impacting my emotions other than the situation?

Do my emotions fit with the facts? Or are my emotions bigger than the situation?

How intense are my emotions right now? Do I need to take a moment to regulate?

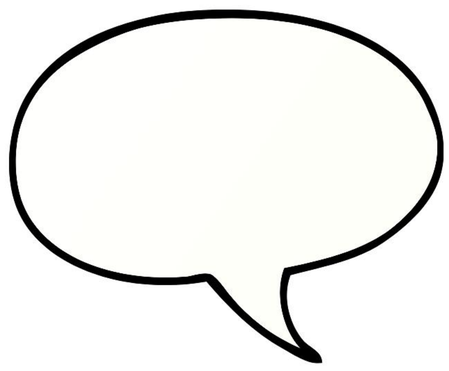
Will I be able to respond in alignment with my values the way I am currently feeling?

What advise would I give to a friend if they were in this type of situation?

When is the best time to respond to this situation?

What is my ideal outcome in this situation?

How will my response/actions affect others?



VALIDATION

VALIDATION MEANS...

...recognizing the truth in someone's perspective, verifying facts, and acknowledging their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. It doesn't require agreement or endorsing invalid aspects but helps the person feel acknowledged and understood.

WHY VALIDATE?

- Builds stronger relationships through active listening and understanding.
- Reduces tension, negative reactions, and anger.
- Encourages problem-solving, closeness, and support.
- Avoids harm caused by invalidation.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO VALIDATE

- The facts of a situation.
- The experiences, thoughts, feelings, beliefs and opinions of the other person.
- Suffering and difficulties encountered by the other person.

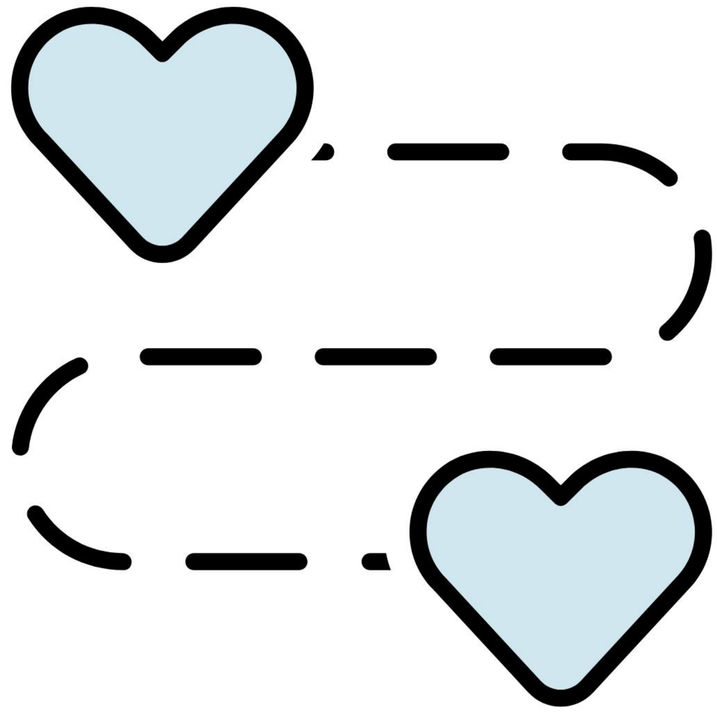
REMEMBER...

- Validating does not necessarily mean you agree.
- Validating does not mean you like it.
- Only validate the valid.

HOW TO VALIDATE

- Pay attention to what the other person is saying.
- Reflect back and paraphrase what they have just told you.
- Pay attention to the other persons body language and facial expressions.
- Show equality. Be yourself and be willing to admit faults and mistakes.
- Admit to the valid. If they ask you for something reasonable, accept this.
- Show care and compassion.
- Show understanding by using phrases such as "It makes sense that you . . . because . . . "

Remember to validate yourself too. Acknowledge and value your own experiences, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and opinions—self-validation is just as important as validating others.



SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES IN RELATIONSHIPS

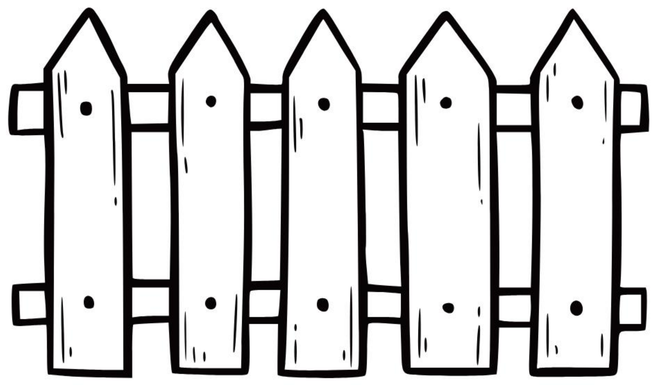
Define your non negotiable limits. What are you comfortable with, what are you willing to compromise on, and what is a deal breaker?

Communicate your boundaries. We can't expect someone else to "just know". Communicating your boundaries sets healthy expectations.

Don't be afraid to say "no" if your partner asks you to do something that makes you uncomfortable.

Be assertive. If you've set your boundaries and your partner does not respect them, it is perfectly okay to reinforce them assertively.

Know your values and needs. When you do, you can be much more sure in what boundaries to set in your relationship.



TYPES OF BOUNDARIES

There are various types of boundaries beyond emotional and physical needs, and considering them broadly is vital for healthy relationships.

EMOTIONAL

Boundaries related to a persons feelings.

INTELLECTUAL

Boundaries related to someone's thoughts and ideas.

PHYSICAL

Boundaries related to personal space and touch.

TIME

Boundaries related to how a person uses their time.

SEXUAL

Boundaries related to the emotional and physical aspects of sexuality.

MATERIAL

Boundaries related to someone's money and possessions.

BOUNDARIES DO'S & DON'TS

✓ DO

Say no when needed

Communicate assertively

Take your time to build trust

Stand by your personal values

Value your own and others opinion

✗ DON'T

Automatically adopt others opinions

Avoid conflict by giving in

Communicate aggressively

Overshare personal information

Push others away

BOUNDARY STYLES

Boundaries determine what is acceptable or not in a relationship. There are three common boundary styles, each with distinct characteristics. Let's explore these differences.

BOUNDARIES

POROUS	HEALTHY	RIGID
Overly trusting	Selective about whom to let in	Keep people at a distance
Overshares personal information	Takes their time to build trust	Untrusting of others
Difficulty saying “no”	Able to say “no” when needed	Almost always says “no”
Avoids conflict above everything	Values both own and others’ opinions	Guarded with personal information
Non assertive	Accepts conflict as a normal part of life	Has inflexible personal values
Passive in nature	Communicates assertively	Communicates aggressively

SETTING BOUNDARIES

WHAT TO SAY

"I'm not comfortable with this"

"I can't do that for you"

"This doesn't work for me"

"I don't have the capacity right now"

"I need to ask that you don't do that"

"That has not been my experience"

"This is not acceptable"

"I'm drawing the line at..."

"I've decided not to"

"Not at this time"

"I've decided not to"

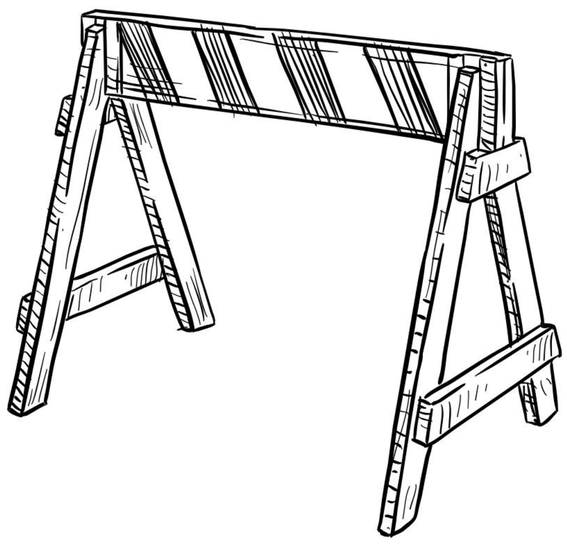
"I disagree with that approach"

"I'm not comfortable with..."

"Please don't do that"

WHAT TO DO

When setting boundaries, use confident body language by maintaining eye contact and speaking steadily. Plan ahead by considering your approach before engaging in tough discussions. Be respectful by avoiding yelling or attacks, while actively listening and staying firm. Compromise when appropriate, as give-and-take is essential in healthy relationships, though standing your ground is also valid.



RELATIONSHIP GREEN FLAGS

We often hear about the need to look out for “red flags,” but knowing what a healthy relationship looks like is ever more important. Read on for some key “green flags” below.



RESPECT

You respect and value your partner, and express gratitude often.



COMMONALITY

You share important goals, beliefs, and values with your partner.



COMMITMENT

You are invested in your partner and the relationship.



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

You communicate your own needs, while also respecting your partners.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

You take responsibility for your actions, and work as a team.



INTIMACY

You feel close and connected with your partner.



EMPATHY

You see your partner’s perspective and understand their feelings.



HONESTY

Your actions align with your words, commitments, and values.



INDEPENDENCE

You have your own separate interests and goals.



CONFIDENCE

You feel comfortable being yourself in the relationship



SAFETY

You respect your partner’s boundaries and feel physically, intellectually and emotionally safe.



BALANCE

You find happiness in time spent together and apart. Some needs are also met outside the relationship through friendships, hobbies, etc.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

Emotional intelligence means understanding and managing emotions in yourself and others. It helps with communication and relationships—and it's a skill you can learn and improve.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Emotional intelligence shows up in how we relate to others and handle emotions. Signs include being able to name feelings (your own and others'), showing empathy, being open to change, having curiosity about people, and being sensitive to others' emotions.

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

We need emotional intelligence because it helps us manage our own emotions, understand others, and build stronger, more connected relationships with less conflict. It also helps us feel more connected to those around us.



THE 4 COMPONENTS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

PERCEIVING EMOTIONS

The first step to emotional intelligence is noticing emotions in yourself and others. This means picking up on both words and body language, like facial expressions and tone. The better you get at this, the easier it is to build on other emotional skills.

REASONING WITH EMOTIONS

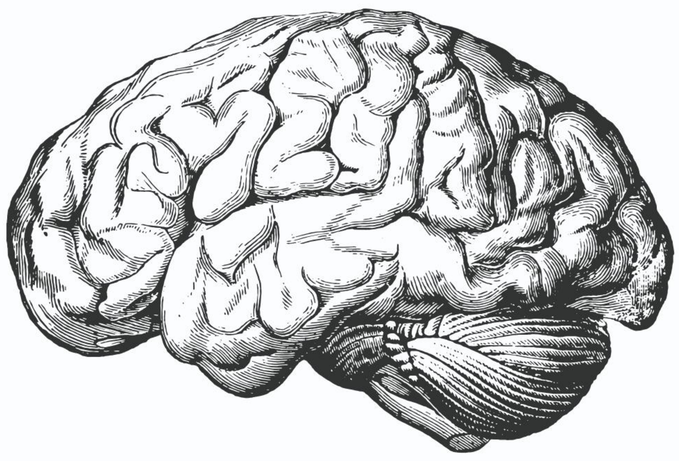
Reasoning with emotions means understanding that no emotion is “good” or “bad.” All emotions give us important clues about how we feel and why. Accepting and understanding them is key to building emotional intelligence.

UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS

Understanding emotions means recognizing that they tell a story—but not the same one for everyone. Once you can notice and accept emotions, the next step is to understand that feelings like anger, for example, may look different in different people and come from different places.

MANAGING EMOTIONS

Managing emotions is the final step in emotional intelligence. It means regulating your feelings and responding well to others. This skill takes time to build and grows from acceptance, understanding, and honest communication with yourself and those around you.



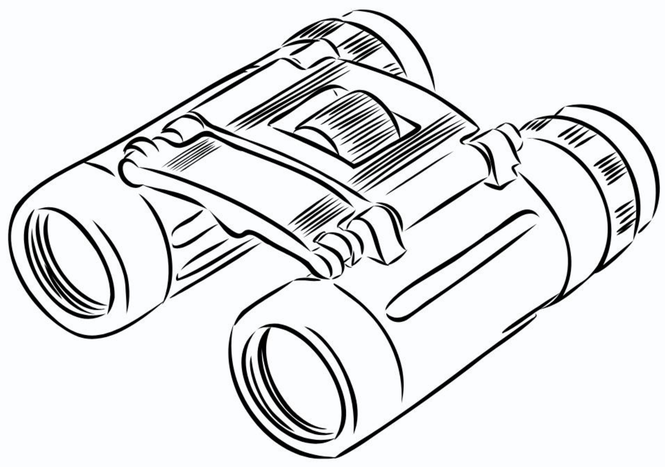
SIGNS OF LOW EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Have you ever met someone who can't manage their emotions or often says the wrong thing at the wrong time? This may be a sign of low emotional intelligence—where a person struggles to understand emotions in themselves and others, and has trouble using that awareness to guide their actions.

SIGNS OF LOW EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

People with low emotional intelligence often struggle to understand or manage emotions in themselves and others. Common signs include:

- Always needing to be right - struggles to accept being wrong and keeps arguing their point.
- Oblivious to others' feelings - misses emotional cues and appears cold or insensitive.
- Behaves insensitively - acts without considering how their behavior affects others.
- Blames others - avoids personal responsibility and shifts blame onto others or the world.
- Emotional outbursts - has difficulty regulating emotions, leading to outbursts.
- Self-centered conversations - often redirects conversations to focus on themselves.



WORDS & ACTIONS OF LOVE

People express and receive love in different ways, which can cause misunderstandings if they differ. Understanding your partner's love language fosters better connection and mutual understanding.

ACTS OF SERVICE

This love expression involves showing affection through acts of service, such as handling chores, providing for the family, or assisting with tasks like picking up the kids or organizing a car service for their partner.

GIFT GIVING

This love expression involves showing affection through thoughtful gift-giving, such as presents, flowers, or handmade items for their partner.

PHYSICAL TOUCH

This love expression involves showing affection through physical touch, such as holding hands, cuddling, kissing, or engaging in intimacy.

QUALITY TIME

This love expression focuses on quality time, such as going on dates, sharing meals, and being fully engaged and present in conversations with their partner.

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

This love expression emphasizes verbal affection, such as saying “I love you,” offering compliments, encouragement, and sharing positive thoughts and ideas.

WHAT IS CODEPENDENCY?

WHAT IS CODEPENDENCY

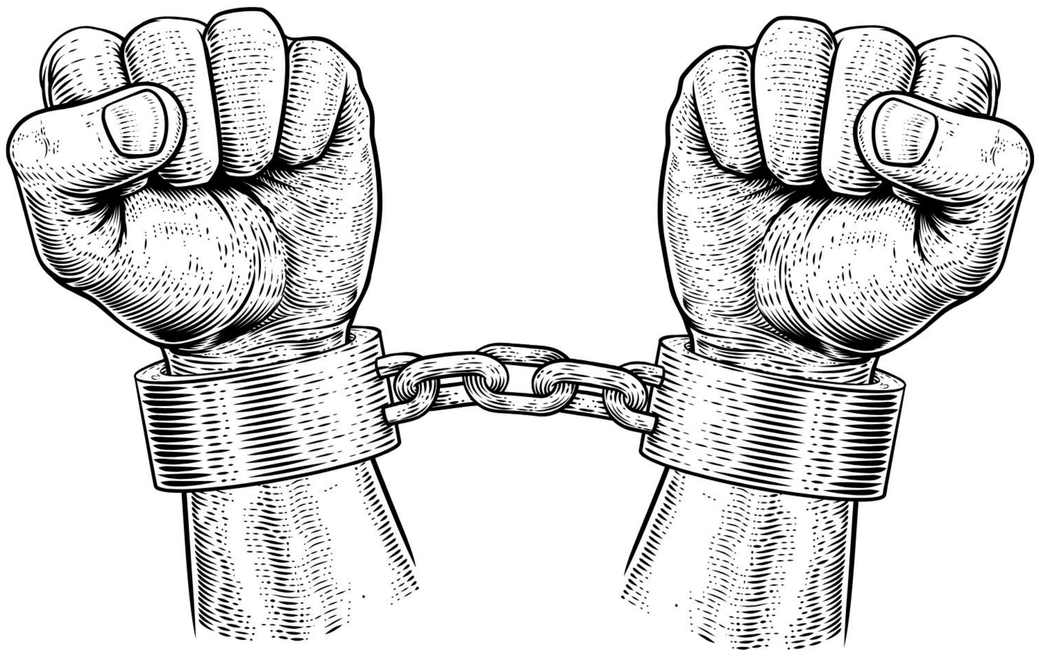
Codependency is a pattern of unhealthy behaviors that make it hard to build balanced, supportive relationships. It's often called “relationship addiction” because people may stay in one-sided or harmful relationships.

SIGNS OF CODEPENDENCY

Putting others' needs first, needing constant approval, tying self-worth to others’ opinions, avoiding conflict, and matching others' moods instead of feeling their own.

CAUSES OF PEOPLE PLEASING

Codependency often stems from growing up in dysfunctional homes—like with addiction, mental illness, or childhood trauma—which can create anxiety in close relationships.



PATTERNS OF CODEPENDENCY

DENIAL

Struggle to recognize feelings, downplay or hide emotions, mask pain with anger or humor, view yourself as fully unselfish, and show negativity passively.

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Feel not good enough, struggle to see your worth, avoid admitting mistakes, seek validation from others, and rely on their approval more than your own.

COMPLIANCE

Stay loyal even in harmful situations, sacrifice values to avoid rejection, ignore your own needs, make impulsive choices, and fear speaking up when you disagree.

CONTROL

Think others can't manage without you, give advice unasked, feel hurt when help is refused, need to feel needed, and fake agreement to get your way.

AVOIDANCE

Keep distance by avoiding closeness, use vague communication to dodge conflict, hide feelings to avoid vulnerability, see emotion as weakness, and hold back appreciation.

HOW TO “UNLEARN” CODEPENDENCY

Unlearning codependency is hard because setting boundaries and putting yourself first can feel wrong. But clear, honest communication that honors your needs is healthy. Start your journey with:

SPENDING TIME ALONE:

Your relationship with yourself matters as much as with others. Taking time alone helps you manage emotions and balance rest with activity.

PURSUING YOUR INTERESTS:

Building self-awareness helps beat codependency. Exploring what you like and dislike reveals who you are and what you want.

BUILDING YOUR SOCIAL SUPPORTS:

Setting boundaries feels easier when you have others to rely on for care and support.

SETTING BOUNDARIES:

Boundaries are essential for healthy relationships, especially with codependency. They help balance your needs with others’.

ENGAGING IN PROFESSIONAL SUPPORTS:

Recognizing codependency is hard, especially if loved ones rely on it. Individual or couples counseling can help you address these issues.

PEOPLE PLEASING

WHAT IS PEOPLE PLEASING?

People pleasing is when someone puts others' needs ahead of their own, often at a personal cost. They may hide their true feelings or say yes to too much to gain approval or avoid conflict.

SIGNS OF PEOPLE PLEASING

Signs of people pleasing can include difficulty saying no, often taking on extra work even when overwhelmed, and overcommitting to plans or responsibilities. People pleasers may avoid conflict, struggle to voice their opinions, hesitate to ask for help, and find it hard to stand up for their own needs.

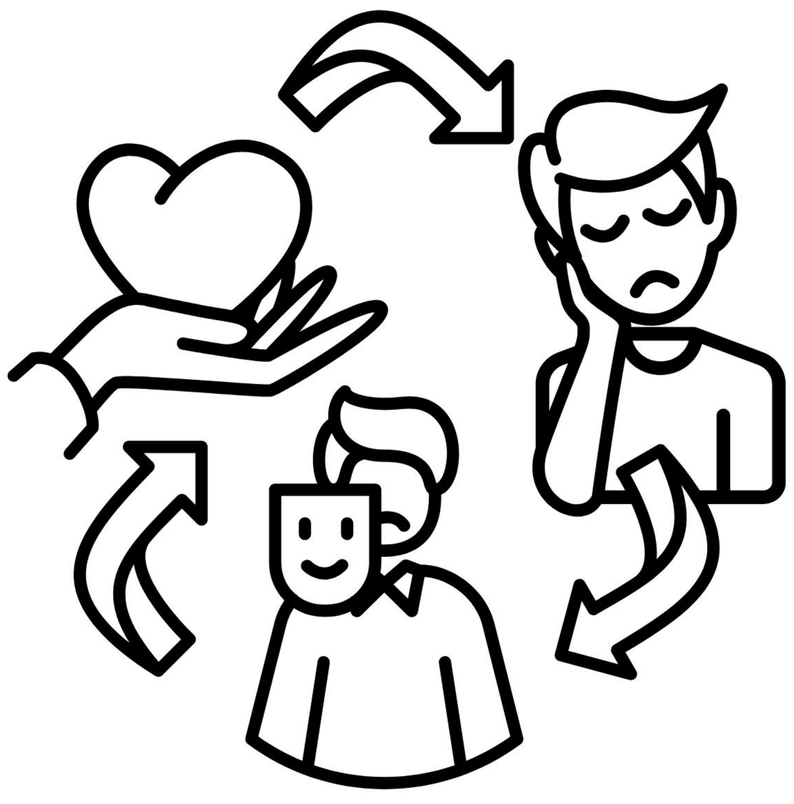
CAUSES OF PEOPLE PLEASING

Some common causes of people pleasing include low self-esteem, fear of conflict, anxiety, or past trauma. It can also stem from growing up in an abusive household, cultural or societal expectations, unequal relationships, or certain personality disorders.

HOW TO STOP PEOPLE PLEASING

It can be hard to start setting boundaries and saying no, often leading to guilt or feeling like a bad person. But setting clear boundaries that reflect your values and needs is healthy and important.

- **Start small**: Begin by meeting just one need at a time, like taking regular breaks between meetings.
- **Take your time**: Give yourself space to think before saying yes to a request. You don't have to respond right away.
- **Set time limits**: If you agree to help, clearly state how long you're available. For example, give specific hours for babysitting.
- **Block out time**: Schedule personal time in your day that's off-limits to others. Treat it as non-negotiable.
- **Practice saying "no"**: Rehearse kind but firm ways to say no. It's okay to say no—doing so doesn't make you a bad person.



THE FAWN RESPONSE

WHAT IS IT?

Fawning involves prioritizing others' needs over your own to avoid conflict, criticism, or disapproval. Known as the "please and appease" response, it's closely linked to people-pleasing behavior.

WHY DOES IT OCCUR?

Fawning often stems from childhood or adolescent trauma, especially in abusive or neglectful households, as a protective response to fear and distress.

WHAT DOES FAWNING LOOK LIKE?

Common expressions of fawning may include:

Fawning appears as excessive compliance, prioritizing others over oneself, avoiding conflict, struggling to say "no," over-apologizing, lacking boundaries, and suppressing personal opinions or preferences. It often involves adapting to others' expectations at the cost of one's own needs.



WHAT IS COUNTER-DEPENDENCY?

WHAT IS COUNTER-DEPENDENCY?

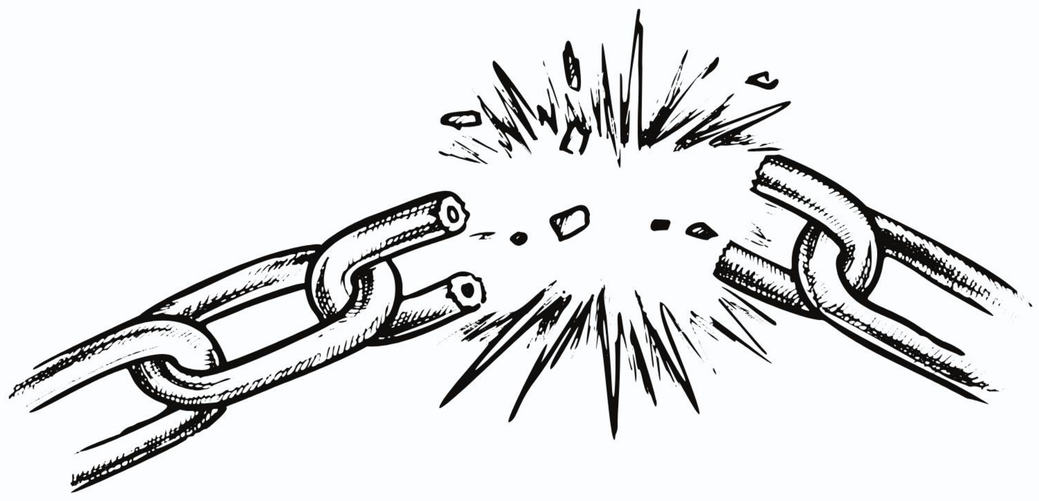
Many know about codependency, often called a “relationship addiction.” Counter-dependency is the opposite: a person is so independent they fear relying on others or asking for help.

SIGNS OF COUNTER-DEPENDENCY

Signs of counter-dependency include difficulty being close to others, a strong need to always be right, refusing to ask for help even when needed, expecting perfection from themselves and others, feeling very uncomfortable showing weakness or vulnerability, and struggling to relax.

CAUSES OF PEOPLE PLEASING

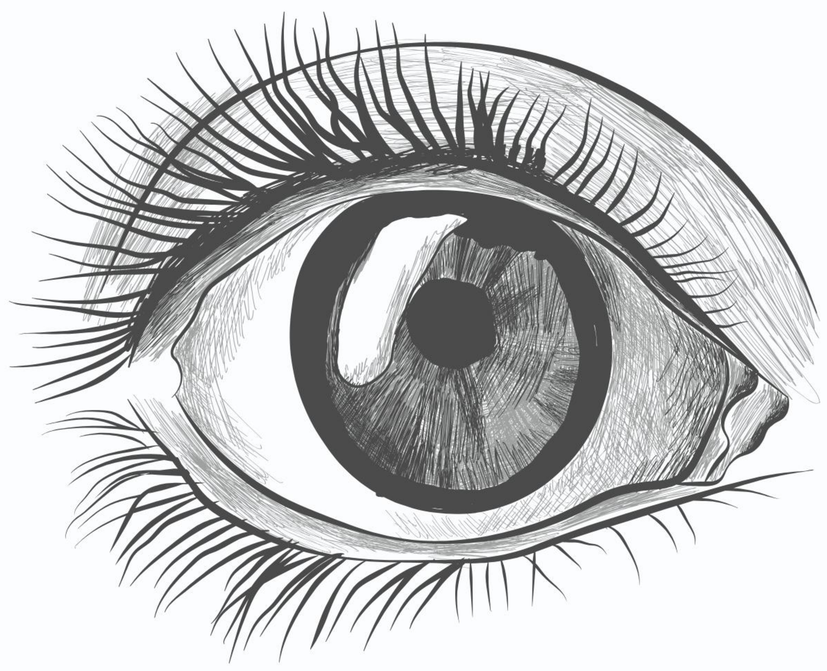
Causes of counter-dependency often trace back to early life challenges such as abandonment, abuse, or trauma. Many people with counter-dependency have insecure, avoidant attachment styles because they’ve learned not to trust or rely on others.



CODEPENDENCE VS COUNTER-DEPENDENCE

CODEPENDENCY

Signs of codependency include clinging to others, acting vulnerably, and feeling overwhelmed by emotions. Codependent people tend to focus on others, feel addicted to relationships, and often have low self-esteem. They struggle with confidence, crave closeness, frequently please others, and may see themselves as victims in relationships.



COUNTER-DEPENDENCY

Signs of counter-dependency include pushing others away, acting strong and invulnerable, and being detached from feelings. Counter-dependent people tend to be self-centered, addicted to experiences, and often have a falsely inflated self-esteem. They avoid intimacy, try to control others, and may try to victimize others first in relationships.

SELF-DEFEATING BELIEFS

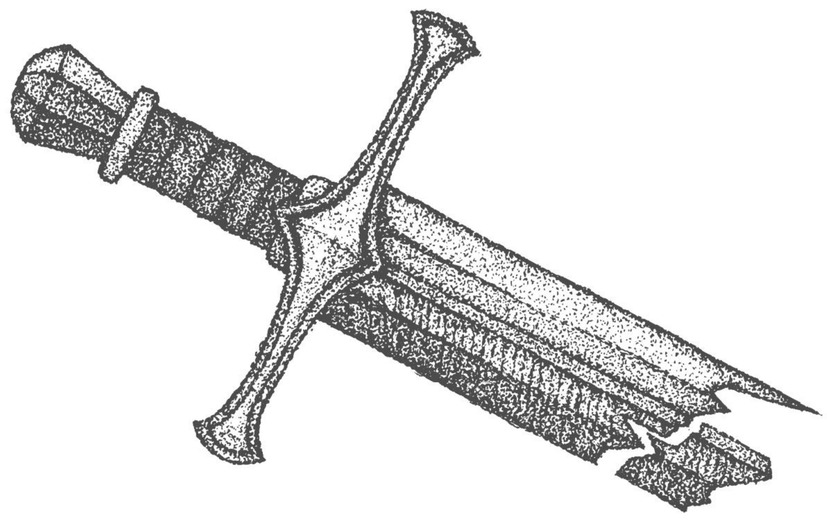
WHAT IT IS

People with counter-dependence often hold self-defeating beliefs rooted in childhood and reinforced over time by avoiding intimacy and pushing others away. The first step to change is recognizing these false beliefs. Below are some common examples experienced by those with counter-dependence.

EXAMPLES

Here are some common self-defeating beliefs seen in counter-dependence:

- “If I pay too much attention to another person, I will lose myself.”
- “If I listen to others, I will get talked out of my own beliefs.”
- “If I get close to someone, they will see how unlovable I am and leave.”
- “Listening to others’ feelings might stir up uncomfortable feelings for me.”
- “If I let myself cry, I won’t be able to stop.”
- “If I’m not in control, I won’t get what I want.”
- “If I’m not in control, others will take advantage of me.”
- “If I get angry, I might lose control and hurt someone.”
- “I can’t cope with the pain of rejection.”
- “If I open up, people will see I’m weak and leave me.”



SELF-SABOTAGE

WHAT IS SELF-SABOTAGE?

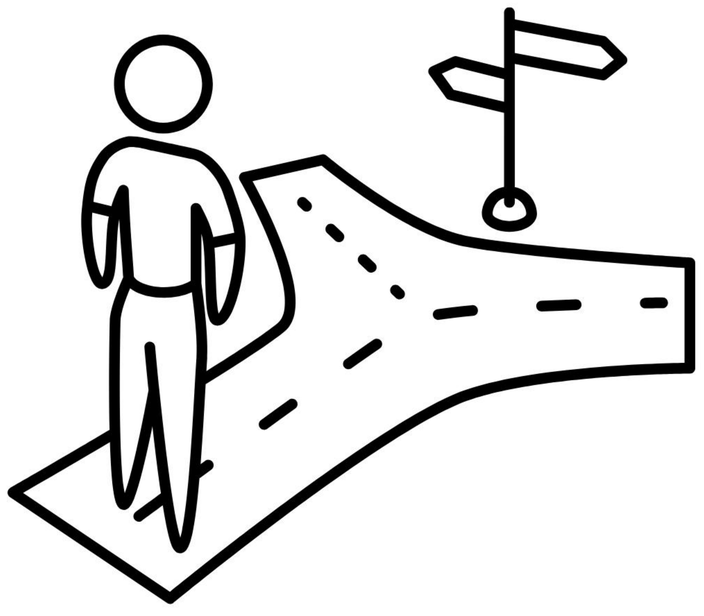
Self-sabotage is when you get in the way of your own success or happiness—often on purpose. It can affect your health, relationships, work, or goals and, over time, can seriously hold you back.

SIGNS OF SELF-SABOTAGE

Trying to be perfect, avoiding tasks out of fear, procrastinating, picking fights, and not asking for help when needed.

CAUSES OF SELF-SABOTAGE

Low self-esteem, fear of failure or change, feeling undeserving of happiness, needing control, and unresolved childhood trauma.



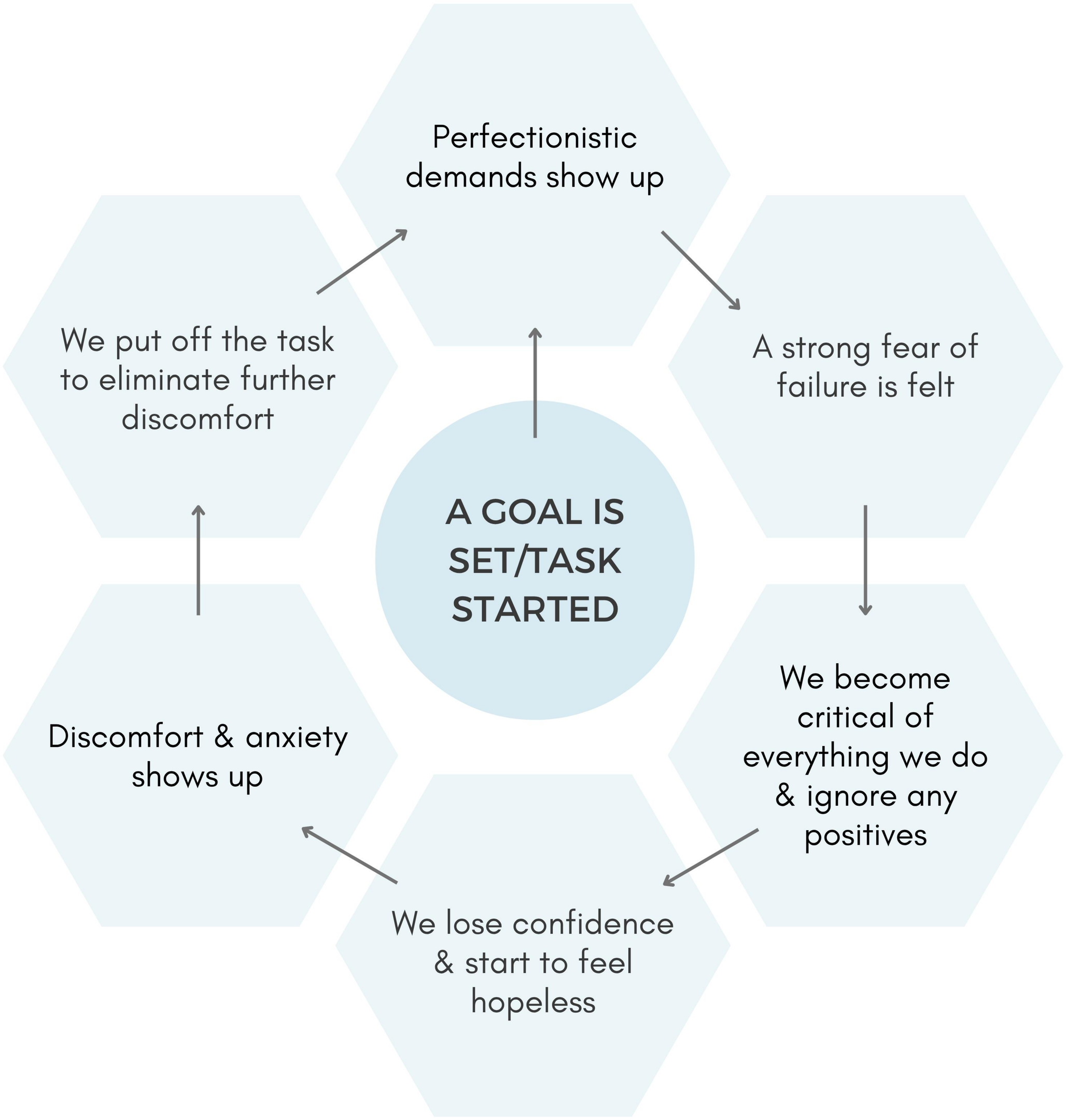
WHAT SELF-SABOTAGE LOOKS LIKE

Self-sabotage can happen in many areas of our lives. Here are some common areas where it shows up and what it might look like:

Procrastination →	You might create rules for yourself that encourage procrastination, like telling yourself, "I don't have time to finish this today, so there's no point in starting."
Relationships →	You focus on the negative aspects of a person and the reasons the relationship won't work, ignoring the positives. You might also start arguments over small issues.
Work →	You focus too much on low-priority tasks and ignore high-priority ones. You might also overload your schedule by starting too many projects at once.
Finances →	You let fear of failure prevent you from making smart financial decisions, like investing or saving. You might also overpay for things to avoid risk and feel more secure.
Health →	You set big goals without thinking if you have the time or resources to reach them. When you don't succeed, you might blame outside factors instead of taking responsibility.
Pleasure →	You hold back from doing things for yourself by using "I can't... until..." thoughts, like "I can't go to the beach until I've lost weight."

THE SELF-SABOTAGE CYCLE

Self-sabotage happens when we stop ourselves from reaching our goals or achieving success. The cycle of self-sabotage shows how we start a task or set a goal, but then end up abandoning it and choosing other activities or behaviours that don't help us.



ADDRESSING SELF-SABOTAGE

Here are some key strategies to help address self-sabotage:

DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS & IDENTIFYING TRIGGERS:

The first step in tackling self-sabotage is to understand when and why it happens. Take time to identify areas of your life where self-sabotage shows up and recognize the triggers, such as uncomfortable emotions or negative thought patterns.

UTILISING A THOUGHT JOURNAL:

Writing down patterns helps identify triggers and address the negative thoughts behind the behaviors. Use a thought-challenging journal to track and address these patterns effectively.

SETTING REALISTIC GOALS:

Unrealistic goals often lead to self-sabotage. Goals that are too small lack motivation, while overly ambitious goals can feel overwhelming and lead to procrastination. Using the SMART goal-setting structure can help set realistic and achievable goals.

PRACTICING SELF-COMPASSION:

Fear of judgment can drive self-sabotage, especially for those with low self-esteem or past trauma. Building confidence, reducing people-pleasing, and practicing self-compassion can help break these patterns.

LEARNING SKILLS TO ADDRESS PROCRASTINATION:

Learning to manage procrastination, improve focus, and break goals into smaller steps can help overcome self-sabotage.

SEEKING PROFESSIONAL SUPPORTS:

When self-sabotage affects many areas of life, seeking professional support can help identify and address triggers, leading to long-term change.

SELF-PRESERVATION VS SELF-SABOTAGE

Self-preservation protects your well-being, while self-sabotage blocks your growth. They can look similar, but self-preservation is rooted in care—self-sabotage in fear.

SELF-SABOTAGE	SELF-PRESERVATION
Procrastinating due to discomfort or fear	Taking regular breaks to manage energy
Deliberately pushing people away or starting conflicts	Setting healthy boundaries within relationships
Avoiding tasks or goals out of fear of failure	Regularly reflecting on positive experiences and strengths
Only focusing on the negative or what could go wrong	Removing yourself from roles or situations not serving you
Engaging in mindless activities as a form of delaying important tasks	Engaging in a variety of activities for both achievement, pleasure and relaxation

REJECTION SENSITIVE DYSPHORIA

WHAT IS RSD?

Rejection sensitive dysphoria (RSD) is an intense emotional response to real or perceived rejection or failure. While most dislike rejection, those with RSD experience it far more deeply and distressingly.

SIGNS OF RSD

Signs of RSD include intense reactions to rejection, people-pleasing, avoiding risk of failure, emotional outbursts, relationship struggles, low self-esteem, and self-doubt.

CAUSES OF RSD

RSD's causes are unclear, but it's linked to emotional regulation areas in the brain, often affected in individuals with ADHD.



RECOGNITION RESPONSIVE EUPHORIA

WHAT IS RRE?

Recognition Responsive Euphoria (RRE) is the opposite of RSD, causing intense pleasure and excitement when acknowledged for achievements.

SIGNS OF RRE

When experiencing RRE, you may feel a surge of positive emotion and euphoria from recognition, praise, or encouragement.

BENEFITS OF RRE

The experience of RRE can lead to increased motivation, improved confidence and a stronger drive to take on challenges.

However, the euphoria associated with RRE may also encourage people-pleasing behaviors in pursuit of continued recognition and validation.

REJECTION SENSITIVE DYSPHORIA RESPONSES

Two common RSD responses are people-pleasing and a 'why bother' mindset, often evident in social or high-stakes situations.
Read on:

THE PEOPLE PLEASER

A person with RSD often falls into people-pleasing, presenting an untrue image to gain approval. This can lead to lost identity, neglecting personal wants and needs, and prioritizing appearing competent over authenticity.

THE “WHY BOTHER” TYPE

A person with this RSD response often gives up before starting, avoiding any situation with a chance of failure. Fear of trying and failing, even when unlikely, leads them to opt out of activities like education, dating, or career opportunities. Despite being skilled, lack of confidence holds them back.

ADDRESSING REJECTION SENSITIVE DYSPHORIA

Some evidence suggests RSD may respond to certain medications, especially for those with ADHD. For others, a combination of strategies and therapy is often most effective.

HELPFUL STRATEGIES INCLUDE:

BUILDING CONFIDENCE & SELF-ESTEEM

Low confidence, self-esteem, and high self-doubt worsen RSD. Strengthening confidence can reduce emotional responses to rejection.

OVERCOMING PEOPLE PLEASING

People-pleasing is common in RSD. Reducing these behaviors helps break the cycle of seeking validation from others.

LEARNING ABOUT WARNING SIGNS

Recognizing early warning signs of discomfort and anxiety—like negative thoughts, self-talk, or physical sensations—helps regain control before emotions escalate.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORTS

RSD can be tough to manage alone. If self-help strategies aren't working, consider seeking support from a psychologist or counsellor.

10 MONEY CONVERSATION RULES FOR COUPLES

- Be respectful and kind—maintain healthy communication despite emotional topics.
- Validate and understand—acknowledge your partner's views without dismissing them.
- Be honest and transparent—avoid hiding purchases or financial behavior.
- Agree on an agenda—structure discussions for focus and engagement.
- Stay calm—avoid yelling, blaming, or manipulation.
- Discuss earning and spending—cover both income and spending habits.
- Pick your battles—accept differing money backgrounds and beliefs.
- Make it a habit—schedule regular money conversations (weekly or monthly).
- Stay organized—use shared tools like accounts or spreadsheets for easy finance tracking.
- Celebrate successes—acknowledge milestones like paying off debt or saving for big goals.

