

GIVING AND RECEIVING CARE

C.A.R.E. is a four-step process for de-escalating frustration and anger in relationships, involving giving care to yourself and to your partner. Becoming vulnerable during conflict can be unsafe if your partner is not willing to become aware of how their words could be interpreted as devaluing, reflect on their deeper emotions or validate your deeper process.

CARE for YOURSELF	CARE for your PARTNER
<p>Checking in: Notice if you are struggling. Ask yourself, “How am I feeling?” “Do I understand why I am upset?”</p> <p>Awareness: Be mindful of any devaluing thoughts you are having about yourself. Ask yourself, “Am I thinking I am not good enough, or I am bad at something, or I don’t matter?”</p> <p>Reflection: Something has come up for you. You might be angry, stressed or resentful. Look at page 3 of the emotional clusters to identify a deeper heart emotion. Ask yourself, “Underneath, am I feeling misunderstood, crushed, let down, or powerless?”</p> <p>Empathy/validation: Hold your hand over your heart, close your eyes and name the heart emotion you are experiencing. Identify a reason why you might be feeling this deeper emotion. Say to yourself, “It is understandable I am feeling _____ because _____.” Continue to hold space for you to experience your innocent heart emotion. Give yourself compassion, “Even though I feel _____, I am loved, worthy of love, connected and a good person.”</p>	<p>Checking in: Notice if your partner is struggling. Ask, “How are you feeling?” “What is on your mind?”</p> <p>Awareness: Be mindful of devaluing words you are thinking or speaking that could be interpreted as devaluing. Ask yourself, “Am I saying something that could cause my partner to feel like they have less value?” Refer to the list of statements below to understand how they could be interpreted as devaluing.</p> <p>Reflection: Support your partner to reflect on their deeper emotions. This might look like spending a few minutes apart for personal reflection, sitting quietly beside your partner, retrieving the emotional clusters sheet for your partner or holding your partner’s hand while they reflect. This is a good time to give yourself C.A.R.E.</p> <p>Empathy/validation: You cannot will yourself to be empathetic but you can will yourself to validate your partner. Validation is more mental than emotional. Consider a reason why your partner might be feeling their heart emotion. It doesn’t matter if your reason is correct, it just shows you can justify their emotional response. Say, “It is understandable you feel _____ because _____.”</p>

Statements that can be Interpreted as Devaluing

“I would never do that.” (Interpretation: There must be something wrong with you because you did that.)

“I can’t believe you did that.” (same as above)

“Are you kidding me?” (same as above)

“Whatever.” (Interpretation: What you are saying or doing has no value to me.)

“It’s none of your business.” (Interpretation: I don’t value you enough to share this with you.)

“I’m done talking about this.” (Interpretation: I don’t value you enough to continue this conversation.)

Removing yourself or silent treatment (same as above with added abandonment.)