

Recognizing Defensive Patterns

Over time unhelpful patterns of behavior and responding can develop in couples forming a negative emotional cycle.

The following prompts will help you identify and reflect on automatic responses and consider their emotional impact.

Use the following questions to focus on your partner's defensive patterns of behavior:

My partner...	Yes/No
Makes excuses	
Ignores me	
Turns away from me or looks down	
Avoids me	
Is angry with me	
Acts defensively in another way	

How else?

Now reflect on your partner's defensive patterns and list your top five feelings that you experience as a result (for example, tired, angry, fed up, sad, frustrated, etc.)

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Having reflected on each one, sit down with your partner and share how you feel.

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