

Fair fighting

First, an honest look at how you both fight now

Every relationship is due to face some conflict. For some couples this means a lot of smaller more regular fights, other couples may fight less but it blows up when they do, and then others again may only experience the occasional conflict.

Regardless of what the situation is in your relationship it is important to reflect on how you and your partner manage conflict, and the ways in which you may both use ‘dirty’ tactics to ‘win’ the fight.

Take a moment to reflect on your current fighting tactics, and once completed, reflect on how ‘fair fighting’ might look from yours and your partners side. Once completed you can come together with your partner to set some expectations and rules together around what ‘fair fighting’ rules you may employ in your relationship.

CURRENT FIGHTING TACTICS

When you want to win a fight, what do you do/say?

When your partner wants to win a fight, what do they do/say?

Fair fighting rules

Take a moment to complete the below sentences.

When we're having a fight...

...I'd like my partner to accept me doing this:

...I want to stop myself from doing this:

...I'm willing to accept my partner doing this:

...I want my partner to stop doing this:

Once you have completed the sentences above, when you're ready, take these answers to your partner to discuss and agree on "fair fighting rules" you can both agree on adopting in any future conflict. Make sure you also hear your partner out about any ideas/rules they would like to add or work on together.

Our fair fighting **agreement**

Additions: rules couples commonly choose, a time-out plan, and a place to sign

RULES COUPLES COMMONLY CHOOSE · TICK THE ONES YOU BOTH WANT

- ☐ One issue at a time; no bringing up last year.
- ☐ No name-calling, mocking or contempt.
- ☐ No “always” and “never”.
- ☐ Either of us can call a time-out; we name a time to come back (within 24 hours).
- ☐ We stay in the room or we say where we are going.
- ☐ No threats to leave the relationship in the middle of a fight.
- ☐ We do not involve the children, the phone or an audience.
- ☐ Repair attempts count, even clumsy ones: a joke, a touch, “can we start again?”

Our own rules

Time-out plan: the word we use, where we each go, and when we come back

Signed _____ and _____ Date _____