

Ground Rules for Couples Therapy

1. Start with being centered and grounded (use TFT karate point, collarbone breathing if needed)
2. Hold in your heart the attitude of gratitude
3. Use "I" language
 - Avoid blaming
 - Avoid fault-finding or excuses or justifying your own contributing actions
4. Keep to facts—avoid assuming
5. Use active listening
6. Assertively speak in ways that make it easier for your partner to hear
7. If emotions are rising high, take time-outs
 - Work on calming down so you can think and see things more objectively
 - Take responsibility to get back to the discussion as soon as you can
 - Be aware that your partner may have distress also
 - If partner needs more time, wait patiently
 - Your partner needs to restart discussion as the ball is now in your partner's court
 - If emotions rise up again when you restart discussions, continue the time-outs and calming down process
 - Practice your TFT for anger, frustration, rage, hurt, anxiety etc. as appropriate
 - Work out your distress with running, walking, pushups, etc. to discharge the tension safely
8. Take responsibility for your contribution to the problems
 - Assume responsibility for what you contributed without nagging, or excuses, or blaming
 - Genuinely apologize when indicated
 - Work on what you can do to make amends, to make restitution where appropriate
9. Avoid obsessing about the problems
 - Practice obsessive TFT treatment protocols, and shift to positive action steps
 - Avoid ruminating, building up your anger and resentment, and keeping yourself stuck on poor me pity pot
 - Avoid nagging, harping, going over the past like a broken record which no one likes to hear on and on

- Take responsibility that obsessing about the problem does nothing to solve the problem
 - Except contribute to your own increasing anger, resentment, rage, feeling sorry for yourself
 - Turns the other off to feeling blamed constantly which puts them in a defensive posture, rather than inviting and encouraging joining together to resolve problems
10. Move forward to finding solutions that could/would be helpful
 11. Share what you yourself are willing to do to improve the situation
 12. Ask for what you need/want to develop solutions
 - Avoid assuming that your partner should know
 - Ask positively and assertively for specifically what you would need/want—accept if partner is not willing or ready to help at this time
 - Avoid being controlling or demanding in your expectations
 - Respect your partner’s feelings, rights, emotions in the moment
 13. Find out what your partner needs to be able to work on what you would like/need
 - Express sincerely what you could do to help your partner as requested
 - If unable to at this time, state this without blaming, sarcasm or defensive criticism
 - Ask assertively and with respect and consideration for your partner what you would need to work on that behavior
 14. Acknowledge and appreciate your partner’s efforts
 - Express with sincerity and conviction
 - Avoid sabotaging the acknowledgement with yes-buts or sarcasm or digs about past behaviors
 15. Agree to disagree and figure out how you can accept and work with the disagreements when necessary

To learn more about Thought Field Therapy visit www.tftcenter.com