



Helpful Tools for Healthy Communication in Marriage/Relationships

- **Gottman-Inspired Tools**

- Listen actively and non-defensively: Repeat back what you heard to ensure you've understood accurately. Empathise, rather than judge.
- Give and accept repair attempts: These are efforts to de-escalate conflict; e.g., a gentle touch, an apology, or saying "Can we have a do-over?"
- Express what you need: Use "I feel..." or "I need..." statements. Share appreciation, not just grievances.
- Check-in regularly: Ask each other open-ended questions, e.g., "How are we doing as a couple?"

- **Emotionally Focused Communication**

- Be vulnerable: Open up about your feelings or needs, and acknowledge each other's emotional experiences.
- Respond with empathy: Show you understand and care about your partner's feelings. Simple responses like "I hear you" go a long way.
- Stay present: Give your partner your full attention. Avoid distractions.
- Resolve issues together. View conflict as a shared problem, not a battle to win or lose. Focus on understanding and supporting each other.



Helpful **TOOLS**
COUNSELLING

Gottman, J. M., & Gottman, J. S. (2020). *The seven principles for making marriage work: A practical guide from the country's foremost relationship expert* (2nd ed.). Harmony Books

Johnson, S. M. (2019). *Attachment theory in practice: Emotionally focused therapy with individuals, couples, and families*. Guilford Press.



Helpful Tools for Couples

Practical tools for healthier, deeper, and happier relationships.



Helpful Tools to Try

- **Active listening**

Show your partner they matter by listening to understand, not to respond.

- **Speak calmly**

When upset, pause, breathe slowly, and speak with kindness.

- **Validate feelings**

Naming emotions (“I hear you, you’re feeling...”) softens conflict.

- **Repair after rupture**

Reconnecting after hurt builds trust. Offer a genuine apology if needed.

- **Nurture your connection**

Rituals of love matter. Make time for little acts of care and fun.



A gentle reminder

Conflict is normal in relationships.
Repair is more important than perfection.



Helpful TOOLS
COUNSELLING

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Helpful Tools for Neurodiverse Relationships

In neurodiverse relationships, differences in communication, sensory needs, emotional expression, and energy can easily be misunderstood. These *tools support* understanding, safety, and connection — *without trying to change who anyone is.*

Helpful Tools to Try



Different Nervous Systems

Each person experiences stress, emotion, and connection differently — neither is “wrong.”



Repair Over Intent

Impact matters more than intention. Repair builds trust after misattunement.



Energy & Sensory Awareness

Overstimulation, fatigue, or shutdown can affect connection and conflict.



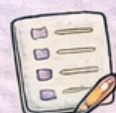
Explicit Communication

Clear, direct language reduces confusion, guessing, and resentment.



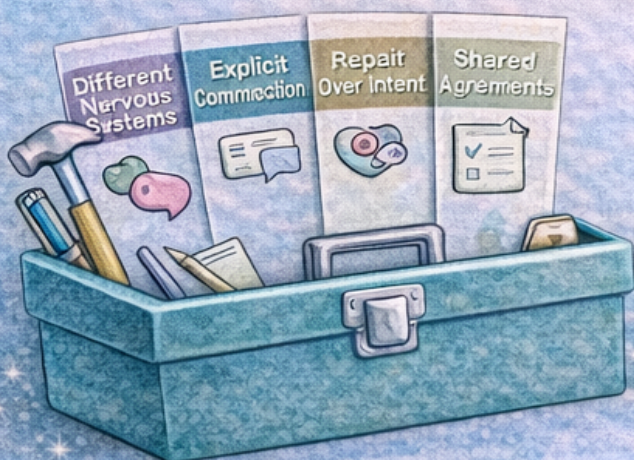
Energy & Sensory Awareness

Overstimulation, fatigue, or shutdown can affect connection and conflict.



Shared Agreements

Agreed ways of communicating, pausing, and reconnecting reduce repeated conflict.



Gentle reminder:

Understanding and repair matter more than getting it “right.”



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