

RULES FOR “FAIR FIGHTING”

Place a check mark for the strategies you use now and circle the ones your partner uses!

1. Ask for a time for the discussion.

- Mutually agreed on time, place, approximate duration, and content
- Not more than one issue at a time

2. Do not argue “below the belt”!

- no name-calling
- no silent treatment
- no verbal threats or other
- no talking over the other person
- no assuming
- no yelling or shouting; use self-control

3. Use “I” messages – “when you I feel; I would like ...

- reduces defensiveness
- retains control
- shows acceptance of responsibility
- provides for everyone’s point of view

4. Deal with feelings first!

- express your feelings in a healthy manner.
- listen – feelings are neither right nor wrong.
- use logic to problem solve rather than emotions.

5. Check that you are correctly labelling the other’s feelings!

- words, nonverbal cues – no assuming or mind-reading

6. Ask for specific action!

- ask for what you want in detail
- ask what the other wants and get details

7. Take a time-out if needed!

- Mutually agree on when and how to take a time-out
- Agree on the next appt and keep it

8. Use teamwork! Describe what you both see as teamwork in your relationship! What needs to change to get there!