

WISDOM LIST

I AM ANGRY WITH MY SPOUSE

Use this wisdom list in preparation for or when you find yourself in a challenging situation. While every situation is unique, we hope you can find these insights insightful and wise.

IN A MOMENT OF ANGER

- Am I calm enough to speak with my spouse? If not, say, “I’m really angry. I can’t talk about it now because I am too angry. I want to talk about it later when I calm down.”
- Plan a time to talk when you are both calm.

BEFORE TALKING ABOUT YOUR ANGER

- Reflect on what triggered your anger. Anger can come from feeling hurt or fear. Try to identify a theme or pattern from past times you have been angry.

WHEN YOU ARE READY TO TALK ABOUT YOUR ANGER

- Begin broaching the issue gently and softly, without attacking or acrimony. Talk about how it makes *you* feel.
- Be curious about your spouse’s behavior. Try to understand why they acted as they did. Check in to see if your understanding is correct or if you are jumping to conclusions.
- Separate between your *interests* (“I don’t like dirty dishes in the sink overnight”), your *solution* (“You have to wash the dishes by hand right after dinner.”) and the *sources of your frustration* (“I was always embarrassed at the mess in my home growing up. It made me feel uncultured.”)
 - Focus on your interests, not your solutions.
 - Be practical and flexible with your solution (there may be many solutions that address your interest).

IF FRUSTRATIONS ARE RISING

- Take a time out. Say, “This conversation is not going well. Let’s take a break until we’re both a little calmer.”

NURTURE YOUR RELATIONSHIP

- Plan some alone time with your spouse to reconnect.
- Nurture your desire to care for each other’s needs.

Learning to work through your differences and disagreements will help you build a stronger relationship.