Couples: communication and repair | Rehearse

Listen, Check, Then Respond

Adult couples | 10 to 15 minutes | Clinician script

Rehearse a brief exchange in which each partner checks what they heard.

Use this practice only when both partners freely agree and feel safe. The aim is to understand a small concern. A therapist may guide the timing or offer written turns.

How to use this page

Pick a low-stakes topic such as sharing space or scheduling. Agree that either person can pass, restart, or end the practice. Do not use a past traumatic event.

The first turn

Speaker: describe one event, its effect on you, and one hope for the conversation. Listener: offer a short summary in your own words. Ask, "What have I missed?" The speaker can correct the summary without having to prove the entire history.

The response

Listener: once the speaker feels understood enough, explain your own perspective or ask a clarifying question. Speaker: listen for something new. Understanding is not the same as accepting blame or promising a change that is impossible.

Switch and close

Switch roles if both want to continue. End with either a small next step or a clear statement that more discussion is needed. If either person feels pressured, stop. A facilitator should address the conditions of the conversation before returning to communication practice.

1. A phrase that helped me feel heard, or a change I would request next time

Original educational material. Not a validated assessment or treatment protocol.

PK06-04 | continued

Facilitator notes and adaptation

Never instruct a partner to disclose fear in front of the other partner. Coercion, threats, or retaliation require separate assessment and specialist support.

About this resource

AI-assisted original draft for More Than Therapy. Version 1.0. Source and editorial checks: 27 October 2026. Independent clinical review pending; no human clinical reviewer is recorded. The references below inform concepts and do not validate or endorse this original page.

Conceptual references

PB01 | The Gottman Institute | Six Tips for the Six Skills of Conflict Management

https://www.gottman.com/blog/manage-conflict-the-six-skills/

PB02 | National Domestic Violence Hotline | Should I Go To Couples Therapy With My Abusive Partner?

https://www.thehotline.org/resources/should-i-go-to-couples-therapy-with-my-abusive-partner/

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