

THE BEHAVIOR CHANGE REQUEST PROCESS

Purpose: This process for couples will help you express frustrations in a contained and healthy way.

MAKING AN APPOINTMENT

Sender: I would like an appointment for a Behavior Change Request Dialogue about a frustration I am feeling. Is now a good time?

Receiver: I am available now (*or state when*).

Sender and Receiver makes eye contact, softens eyes and holds gaze for three deep breaths.

Sender: *Shares an appreciation:* First, I would like to express an appreciation which is....

Receiver: *Mirrors:* You want to express an appreciation which is...Did I get it?

CONNECTING NON-VERBALLY

Sender and Receiver makes eye contact, softens eyes and holds gaze for three deep breaths.

SHARING A FRUSTRATION

Sender: I get frustrated when you... *State IN ONE sentence a behavior that frustrates you. Example: I get frustrated when you use a harsh tone of voice when you talk with me.*

Receiver: *Mirrors:* Let me see if I've got it. If I did, you said your frustration is...
Checks for accuracy: Did I get it?

Receiver: *Takes a deep breath and says:* I am ready to hear your frustration fully.

Sender: When you do that I feel ... (*angry and sad, etc.*) and I imagine that (example: you don't care about me, etc.) ... and then I react by... (*withdrawing, exploding, etc.*)

Receiver: *Mirrors accurately:* So you are frustrated when I...
Checks for accuracy: Did I get it?
Expresses curiosity by inviting more: Is there more about that?



A NOTE TO THE RECEIVER

If you get on overload, raise your hand and say: "I'm on overload, let me try to mirror you back so far."

MY EARLY CHALLENGE

- Sender:** *Take a minute to breathe deeply. When you are ready, recall a memory of a challenge from the past that comes up when you experience that frustration.*
- All of that reminds me of a challenge in my early life when... (significant adults were not there or there in negative ways) and then I would imagine that they... (did not love me, would never understand me, etc.)*
- Receiver:** *Continues to mirror, checks for accuracy and invites more until you "got it all" and there is "no more."*

SUMMARIZING

- Receiver:** *Gives an accurate Summary Mirror from the beginning: You get frustrated when I..... And when I do that you feel... And when you feel that, you remember an early challenge when..... and you had those same feelings.*
- Did I get it? Mirrors any adjustments.*

VALIDATING

- Receiver:** *You make sense and what makes sense is that when I frustrate you by....., it makes you feel..... and that reminds you of an early challenge when significant people did..... (the frustrating behavior) and you felt.....*
- Checks for accuracy: Is that a good validation?*
- Sender:** *Yes (or, I want to add something).*

EMPATHIZING

- Receiver:** *I imagine that you might be feeling.... – Or – I imagine that you might have felt....*
- Checks for accuracy: Is that what you feel/felt?*
- Sender:** *Yes (or, I want to add something.)*

THE BEHAVIOR CHANGE REQUEST

Receiver: So, describe three behaviors that I can do that would meet that need and remove that frustration.

Sender: *States three Behavior Change Requests. Make sure they are positive and SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-limited). Example: For the next two weeks, I would like you to call me three times a week and tell me what you are doing and one thing you appreciate about me. The Receiver will select ONE of them.*

Receiver: *Mirrors each request until it is 100% accurate. Chooses ONE behavior you can do and say: I will stretch and gift you by...*

Sender: *Mirrors the "gift."*

CLOSURE: EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

Sender: Thank you for being willing to give me this gift. It will begin to heal my early challenge of.... (Example: *It will begin to heal earlier experience of feeling abandoned and invisible, reduce my fear of losing my job) and help me to feel loved and valued.*

Receiver: *Mirrors, then says:* Thank you for giving me this opportunity to stretch for you. It will help me overcome my fear of.... And help me grow into being a more ... person/partner. *Example: It will help me overcome my fear of closeness and help me grow back into being a more connected, considerate person and a more available partner to you.*

Thank you for sharing.

Sender: Thank you for listening.

Give each other a one-minute hug with three deep breathes in sync. Eye contact on release.

On the next page, please record your three requests.

SWITCHING ROLES

When all the steps are completed, switch roles and repeat the process.

BEHAVIOR CHANGE REQUESTS LISTS

Instructions: At the conclusion of the BCR Dialogue, the three requests can be written below.

MY BEHAVIOR CHANGE REQUESTS

Example: For the next three weeks, when you know you will be more than 30 minutes late, please give me a call at least 30 minutes before the time of our appointment to let me know about the change.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

MY PARTNER'S BEHAVIOR CHANGE REQUESTS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

NOTES
