

## RELATIONSHIP CONFLICT FIRST-AID



Couples therapy can help us understand the historical wounds that are triggered when we experience conflict in our relationship. But our long-held reactive behaviours can take time to shift. It requires awareness and commitment to small consistent changes. The 9 Rs can help

### RELEASE\*

Don't bottle up the little feelings, allowing them to build into big ones that you may not be able to control in the midst of conflict.

### RECEIVE

Listening is more than being quiet. Practice letting go judgement and defensiveness, to really hear what the other is communicating.

### RESTRICT

Stay focused on the topic at hand. Veering into past events or other grievances can muddy the waters and derail the process.

### RESPOND

When our buttons are pushed we might feel we want to cause the same hurt we are feeling. Stop, breathe, respond constructively.

### RESPECT

We can become abusive towards the people we are most familiar with. Respectful language will pave the way to healthy relationship.

### REFLECT

Restating and paraphrasing what you've heard can help to check you've understood and show others that you've listened.

### RESPONSIBILITY

Sentences that start with "I feel.." rather than "you make me feel..", help us take responsibility for our emotions and move away from blaming.

### RELINQUISH

Are you trying to change your partner into who you *want* them to be? Try Letting go control and see how much better you both feel.

### RETIRE\*\*

Stopping an argument needn't mean avoiding. The time-out technique means agreeing together to take a temporary pause.

\*Our infographic entitled *Consensual Conversations for couples* may help you learn how to do this

\*\*Check out our *Time Out for Couples in Conflict* worksheet