
Partner Communication and Negotiation Steps and Questions

Assess your client's ability: Use open-ended and specific questions to assess the client's ability to communicate with partner or partners.

Examples:

- "Does it seem realistic to talk to your partner about this?"
- "What experience do you have discussing things like this with your partner?"

Explore your client's barriers: If the client expresses that it is difficult to talk to a partner, assess what barriers the client faces in talking to the partner. Use open-ended and specific questions.

Examples:

- "How do you think your partner might react if you talk about FC2?"

Identify strategies: Help the client identify strategies that she can use to talk to the partner. Use open-ended and specific questions to help the client identify personal strategies. The most effective strategies come from the client. Only this person knows what will work. Give the client plenty of space to identify potential strategies. Avoid being directive in this discussion.

Examples:

- "How have you brought up topics like this in the past with your partner?"
- "What do you think might work?"

These are some strategies that other clients have used:

- "I forgot to take my pill and I don't want to get pregnant, and I know you don't like to wear condoms, so I am going to wear the female condom".
- "It's better to be safe than sorry, so let's give this female condom a try we can spice it up".
- "I think I will place the FC2 on the pillow, and say I have a present for him"
- "It really turns me on when we try something new...Let's give the female condom a try!"

Partner Communication and Negotiation Steps and Questions Continued

Explore client ability to resolve conflict with partner: Help the client to explore some strategies for resolving conflict with partner. Stress listening to partner view point and provide appropriate feedback.

Examples:

- “I do trust you and no one has been playing around. I do not like the way the pill affects me and neither of us wants to get pregnant. I know you do not like condoms and this is different.”
- “I know you do not like to use condoms, however, I heard the FC2 warms to body temperature and is not constricting like the male condom”.

Partner communication guidelines: Help the client to prepare for discussions with partner, suggest the following guidelines:

- Decide when and where you want to talk. Choose a neutral place that is safe, yet private. Choose a place that is comfortable for both of you.
- Decide what you want to say. Be clear with yourself about your goals and expectations. Set realistic expectations for yourself and your partner.
- Ask your partner for his or her ideas; create a dialog.
- Try not to drink or use drugs before you talk. Alcohol and other drugs make communication difficult for many people.
- Plan to talk sometime other than when you are about to have sex. Plan to talk at a time when sex is not happening.