

Re-Integration Worksheet: Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Changes in your relationship due to COVID shelter in place

- | | | |
|---|------------|-----------|
| 1. Do you feel your relationship was less stressed during shelter in place? | Yes | No |
| 2. Do you feel you were able to spend more quality time with your spouse/partner? | Yes | No |
| 3. Do you feel you learned more about your spouse/partner? | Yes | No |
| 4. Do you feel financial stress impacted the relationship more during shelter in place? | Yes | No |
| 5. Do you feel homeschooling increased stress in the relationship? | Yes | No |
| 6. Do you feel childcare issues increased stress in the relationship? | Yes | No |
| 7. Do you feel you and your spouse/partner focused more on home improvement tasks than relationship building tasks? | Yes | No |
| 8. Do you feel you and your spouse/partner argued more during shelter in place? | Yes | No |

The "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" as Proposed by John Gottman

By Raquel Peel

From: <https://theconversation.com/the-coronavirus-lockdown-could-test-your-relationship-heres-how-to-keep-it-intact-and-even-improve-it-134532>

1. First Horseman: **Criticism.**
 - a. Defined as an attack on your partner's character, as distinct from offering a critique or voicing a specific complaint.
 - b. Psychologists explain criticism includes inflexible "always" and "never" statements such as "you always have to have the last word" or "you never listen".
2. Second Horseman: **Contempt.**
 - a. Defined as an insult to your partner.
 - b. People might do this verbally using sarcasm, or simply by rolling their eyes.
 - c. An example is when your partner is talking to you and you say "here we go again" without mindfully listening to what they are trying to say.
3. Third Horseman: **Defensiveness.**
 - a. Defined as a counterattack, most often in response to perceived criticism.
 - b. Used to protect oneself when feeling victimized.
 - c. Assign partner responsibility for causing them pain.
 - d. An example is developing an "I am right and they are wrong" attitude when feeling constantly criticized or misunderstood.
4. Fourth Horseman: **Stonewalling.**
 - a. Defined by elaborate maneuvers to avoid interacting with a partner.
 - b. People who stonewall will often stop communicating with their partner, with the exception of negative non-verbal gestures.

Common challenges couples faced during COVID lockdown

By Sarah Hanlon

From: <https://www.theknot.com/content/relationship-challenges-at-home>

Challenge	Solution
Small Fights Are More Common <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More time together and increased stress increases likelihood of disagreements	Focus On Your Communication Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address issues as they occur and do not play the blame game
You're Both Managing More Stress <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unexpected changes in a short period of time increases stress• Examples: teleworking, homeschooling, childcare, shelter in place, gyms closed	Be Intentional About Relaxation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritize your mental and physical well-being
It's Harder to Have Alone Time <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More time together means less time alone• Shelter in place means less opportunity for alone time	Focus on Your Emotional Connection <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the time to focus on making the relationship stronger
You're Both Working From Home <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased potential for WiFi issues, childcare conflicts, and lack of space issues	Create a New Routine <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Devise a schedule that fits the needs of everyone at home including work start and stop times
You're Apart from Loved Ones <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elimination of extended family meals or outings with friends can cause concern about well-being of family and friends• Increased loneliness	Virtual Connections Are Easier than Ever <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider having a video chat with friends and family

Tips for improving your communication skills

From: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/keeping-your-relationship-strong/relationship-communication-tips-during-covid-19>

1. **Be an active listener.** Give each other your full attention, free of interruptions. Turn off the television, and let phone calls go to voicemail.
2. **Show that you're listening.** Try repeating back what you heard through phrases such as, "So what you're saying is..." or "If I understand you correctly, you feel..."
3. **Pay attention to your body language.** If you're speaking in person or through video chat, uncross your arms, offer a smile and make eye contact with your partner.
4. **Talk at a stress-free time.** Avoid talking about the coronavirus or other sensitive issues when either of you is tired, hungry or pressed for time.
5. **Keep your sense of humor.** Using humor can break tension and help you connect through the stress and pressure caused by this situation.
6. **Make "I" statements.** Be specific about how you feel. Express your feelings with neutral comments such as "I feel...", "I'm concerned that...", or "I'm worried that..." instead of phrases that put people on the defensive, such as "You never...", "You always ...," or "You're so ..."
7. **Talk about the issue, not who's right or wrong.** Focus on finding specific solutions or answers instead of assigning blame.
8. **Acknowledge the other person's point of view.** Make an effort to show you're listening and you understand, even if you don't agree.
9. **Take a break if needed.** Take 15 minutes to be alone and calm down if your conversation becomes heated or you're on the verge of saying things you'll regret. Commit to revisiting the issue when your emotions are under control.

Watch free webinars to boost your communication skills available at www.militaryonesource.mil. Choose from topics including:

- Three C's of Communication
- Breaking the Barriers to a Healthy Relationship: Couples' Intimacy and Communication
- Communication Training
- Communication and Assertiveness Training

List the relationship activities or strategies used during COVID teleworking to maintain a healthy relationship

Examples: take a time out, alone time for self, exercise together, meditate/pray together

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Which of these relationship activities or strategies could you **realistically** continue to use on a routine basis once back at work?

NOTE: Routine ≠ Daily

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List the potential barriers to being able to engage in these relationship activities or strategies.

Examples: work schedule, children's activities

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Use the chart below to develop a schedule for implementing relationship activities or coping strategies. Indicate an approximate time you plan to engage in the activity.

Note: You do not need to have an activity for every day initially. That is the end goal.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			