

Do you Canoe?



“There are two types of couples: those who have capsized and those who are going to capsize.”

ALL couples have conflict and differences. What matters is how you handle them.

The CSDC offers individual counseling, couples counseling, and consultation services to students in need of support.

Varner House
(540) 568-6552

www.jmu.edu/counselingctr/Services/SAS.html

For more information, please visit the website listed above.

MYTHS THAT COUPLES HAVE

- “If we love each other, we should stay happy all the time.”
- “We should always be completely honest with the other person regardless of the impact on him or her.”
- “We should want to be together all the time and not need to be with friends anymore.”
- “Conflict is bad.”
- “Someone is always right and someone is always wrong.”
- “Healthy couples always seem to know what their partner is thinking and feeling.”
- “You shouldn’t have to work so hard to have a good relationship.”



→ “That will never happen to us.”

→ “My partner should understand me even if I don’t tell him/her how I feel.”

These generalizations are all **FALSE**. No couple will ever know everything there is to know about each other. Nor will they want to spend every waking moment together.

24/7 bliss is not possible.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



Sexual Assault Response Services



Creating and Maintaining a Healthy Relationship Takes Work!



Signs of Hidden Issues

• If you and your partner feel as though you are going in circles over and over again.

- If one or both of you are avoiding the other person.
- If there are “trivial triggers.” These are events that lead to disagreements and arguments that are not necessarily “big issues.” For example, leaving dirty dishes in the sink or not putting the toilet seat down.
- If you find that you or your partner are “keeping score” of who has “won” or “lost” the most arguments.

Communication Danger Signs

- Disagreements and arguments that seem to escalate into bigger issues.
- Invalidation of your partner’s feelings.
- Negative interpretations of what is being stated.
- Avoiding or withdrawing from communication with your partner.

In communication, stay away from ALWAYS and NEVER.

Suggestions for Resolution

Stop Escalation: Remain focused on the problem that is currently being discussed. Avoid saying “Yeah, well, last week you did ____! That was way worse than me doing ____!”

Laugh: This helps relax the muscles that usually tense up during a disagreement or an argument. Finding humor also helps to lighten the atmosphere, which helps conversations to be productive.

Validate Feelings: We can’t help the way we feel. To validate feelings, express an understanding that you can see how your partner feels the way that he/she does.

Try using “I-Messages” to communicate your feelings. For example:

I feel ____ when ____ happens. I would like for ____ to happen instead.

Know Your Danger Signs: Every couple has different signals and triggers that lead to arguments. Be aware of your signs and what to do if they show up.

Communicate: Your partner will not know if something is wrong, or what it is, if you do not tell him/her!

“When the grass looks greener on the other side, it’s time to water your own lawn.”

Degrees of Forgiveness

Step One: “I recognize that I blew it.” “I know I messed up.” “I see that I have upset you.”

Step Two: “I’m truly sorry.”
“I apologize.”

Step Three: “Will you forgive me?” “I am asking for forgiveness.” “I can only hope that you will forgive me.”

