

# HEALTHY COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR LONG-TERM SPOUSES & PARTNERS



Strong relationships are built over years of shared memories, daily routines, and supporting one another through life's ups and downs. For spouses and long term partners, communication plays a powerful role in maintaining connection, respect, and emotional well-being. Yet as we age, communication can sometimes become more challenging. Physical health changes, stress, memory difficulties, and shifting family roles may lead to misunderstandings or less patience with one another.

The good news is that healthy communication can be strengthened at any age. Whether you have been together for five years or fifty, practicing thoughtful communication can help you both feel valued and understood.

Here are a few ways partners can stay connected and emotionally close.

## 1. PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING

Listening is one of the most meaningful ways to show love. Put aside distractions, make eye contact, and give your partner your full attention. Try to understand their feelings before responding.

### **You might say:**

“I hear that this has been frustrating for you. Can you tell me more about how you are feeling?”

This small shift helps conversations feel more supportive rather than rushed or tense.

## 2. SHARE APPRECIATION OFTEN

Daily gratitude can have a tremendous impact on emotional closeness. Over time, couples may unintentionally take one another for granted. A few kind words can remind your partner how important they are in your life.

***Check out the next page for more.***

## Try noticing the simple things:

"Thank you for making breakfast."  
"I appreciate you helping me today."

Positive communication builds trust and keeps your relationship strong.

## 3. USE "I" STATEMENTS TO REDUCE CONFLICT

Disagreements happen in every partnership. How we communicate during those moments matters. Using "I" statements keeps the focus on your own feelings rather than placing blame.

### Instead of:

"You never listen to me."

### Try:

"I feel worried when we do not talk things through."

This approach helps both partners feel respected and more willing to work toward a solution.

## 4. CHECK IN REGULARLY ABOUT EMOTIONAL NEEDS

As life changes, our emotional needs change too. Regular check-ins help couples stay on the same page, especially when facing stress, retirement adjustments, or health concerns.

### Ask each other:

What went well this week? Is there anything weighing on your mind? How can I support you?

A simple weekly conversation together can be a healthy routine.

## 5. LAUGH AND HAVE FUN TOGETHER

Shared joy is a big help for mental health and connection. Make time for hobbies you enjoy as a couple. Try something new together. Laughter can ease tension, boost mood, and remind you of the bond you share.

## 6. SEEK SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED

Sometimes communication challenges can feel overwhelming. Couples therapy or mental health services can provide helpful strategies for improving communication and restoring connection. Talking to a professional is a sign of strength and commitment to each other.

## YOUR RELATIONSHIP DESERVES CARE

Healthy communication isn't about being perfect. It's about making room for understanding, patience, and kindness. Your relationship has already proven its strength. With a little attention and openness, your partnership can continue to grow in meaningful ways.

## WE CAN HELP.

Our hospital-based outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging or a chronic diagnosis. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community consultations.

**Call us today at**