



 **Stop.**

 **Think.**

 **Change.**

# A guide

## for living in healthy relationships

Building stronger parental relationships in Bromley




In partnership with



Or scan



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# Welcome to our guide for living in healthy relationships

In Bromley we want all our children to grow up, thrive and have the best life chances in families who flourish and are happy to call Bromley home.



This is our ambition and what we strive to achieve every single day.

For our children to thrive and live healthy, safe and secure lives, they need to experience family relationships that are healthy and stable. All relationships have tricky moments - it's how they are experienced and resolved that matters. Many research studies have proven that positive relationships have a significant impact on the children in those families.

And the opposite is true - parental conflict has a significant and direct negative impact on the children in those families. Children who are exposed to parental conflict can suffer long-term harm which affects their:



emotional and social development



mental health



educational attainment



employability



future relationships





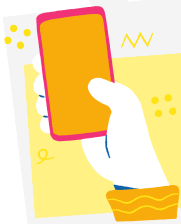
We know and understand that in every relationship there are arguments and conflict. These are healthy and a normal part of life.

But some couples may argue more frequently and intensely. If these arguments and struggles are left unresolved, they can develop and grow which can change your relationships from healthy to unhealthy and even to abusive.

That's why we have produced a range of information for all parents in the borough, whether together, separated or considering separation, who want to find ways to improve their relationship and get on better. This guide pulls together a range of help, advice and tools for parents and for practitioners who are working with them. This information is relevant for all relationships, including: 'traditional' couples; same sex couples; families with a foster or adopted child; families where there is a blend of cultures or religions; and every other family structure.

It is important to remember that we are here for every family.

You can:



visit our website - [www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub)  
email: [bcpadmin@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:bcpadmin@bromley.gov.uk) or 020 8461 7259



visit our six Children and Family Centres

or reach out on social media



The Bromley Children Project



[thebromleychildrenproject](https://www.instagram.com/thebromleychildrenproject)

If you have any feedback on this guide, please let us know by using the details above.

**Rachel Dunley**

Head of Service: Early Intervention and Family Support  
Bromley Council

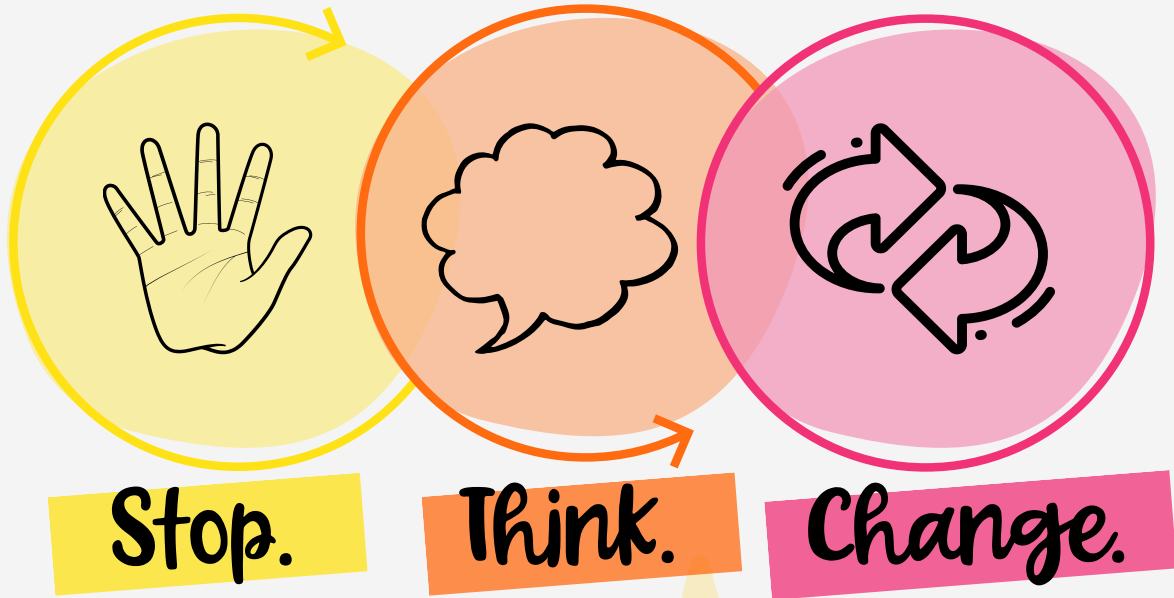
Or scan



Section 1:

# How to use this guide

This guide is designed around our three-step healthy relationships model:



This will help to reduce conflict and to keep your relationships healthy.

**Please remember that this guide is not designed to keep couples together.**

It is designed to help you to focus on:

- your child's wellbeing
- the impact of your unhealthy relationships on your child
- identifying the steps that you can take to improve your relationships whether you are together, separating or separated



# Step 1



**Stop.**

**Take a moment to stop and think about how healthy your relationship is.**

To help you do this, we have a set of three short quizzes. We would recommend that all parents should start with the same quiz - **the child's viewpoint**.

**1**

## Action 1 - The child's viewpoint

Ask your child to complete the child's viewpoint quiz. You need to support your child as they complete this quiz.

Then you can move onto the relationship quiz - there is one quiz for parents who are still together or who are considering separating and a quiz for those who are separated. Ideally both parents should complete the questionnaire, but it can still be useful if just one parent does.

**2**

## Action 2 - The parent's viewpoint

Answer the relevant quiz for your relationship status:

Quiz 2 -  
Parents who are together  
or are considering separating

Quiz 3 -  
Parents who are separated

Each quiz has been designed to help you to better understand:



the amount of conflict  
in you relationship



how the conflict is  
affecting your child



the types of things you  
argue about most

Or scan



online

### Do it online

You can complete the quizzes online - visit  
[www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub/  
bromley-parenting-hub-stop-think-change/2](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub/bromley-parenting-hub-stop-think-change/2)

## Step 2



**Think.**

Use the results from the quiz to think about your strengths and what needs to change.

Understanding the health of your current relationship is essential to understanding what you can do to move forward.

We recommend taking a moment to stop and think about your relationship so that you identify:



the strengths and positives that you can build upon



the areas that need your time, energy and focus

**3**

### Action 3 - Use our self-help guides

We have developed a set of 10 Relationship Thought Prompts to help you think about the simple actions that you can take to continue to make your relationship healthy.

**4**

### Action 4 - Activities and things that can help

We have a library of activities and advice for specific elements that the quiz may identify. These can help you think through any issues that you have identified and then identify the solutions.



Remember, you can seek support from others around you, such as family, friends, professionals and others that you trust. Or get in touch with us.



#### Do it online

You can find the guides and activities online -visit [www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub/bromley-parenting-hub-stop-think-change/3](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub/bromley-parenting-hub-stop-think-change/3)



# Step 3



## Change.

Once you understand the strengths of your relationship and the areas that you can improve, we have pulled together a range of support that will help you make the changes you need.

We have 3 streams of help and support:

5

### Step 5 - Find the right support for you

Choose the right ideas for you, what you need and your lifestyle:



#### Online resources

We have pulled together a list of online resources that you can use on your own or as a couple.



#### Parenting courses

We offer a range of free parenting courses and online seminars.



#### Directory of services

We have created a directory of services to help you find the advice you need for yourself.



6

### Step 6 - Get in touch

Find out how to contact us.

[see page 120]

online

#### Do it online

You can find the support online - visit [www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub/bromley-parenting-hub-stop-think-change/5](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub/bromley-parenting-hub-stop-think-change/5)

## Section 2:

# The importance of healthy relationships

When two people share responsibility for a child, no matter whether they are still together or separated, the relationship between them has a direct impact on the emotional wellbeing and mental health of their child.

A healthy parental relationship is one that nurtures the physical, emotional and social development of a child. This creates an environment of nurture which lays the foundation for the child's personality, life choices and overall behaviour. It can also affect the strength of their social, physical, mental and emotional health. Some of the benefits of experiencing healthy relationships include that the child will:



In a survey by The Children's Society, 70% of children said that parents getting on well is one of the most important factors in their happiness. Evidence clearly shows that children who are exposed to parental conflict can suffer long-term harm which affects their:



Not all conflict is damaging. But where this conflict is frequent, intense and poorly resolved it can harm a child's emotional wellbeing, causing unhappiness and potentially harming their life outcomes.



Section 3:

# Identifying conflict in parental relationships

Do you recognise any of these things?



Are you arguing, having rows, shouting all the time with each other about things like money, how you parent or housework?



Are you not able to say sorry after an argument and move on?



Are you worried about splitting up?



Is there sulking, silent treatment, slamming doors or walking away from each other?



Are you using hurtful texts, emails or social media against each other?



Are you anxious or worried and is this getting in the way of managing everyday life?



Are you moaning about your partner to your child?

If so, here are some tips to help you reduce anxiety and stress at home.



## Stop.

Is a disagreement escalating to a point where you are no longer in control and you are just reacting? If so, pause. Take a step back. Take a breath. When you're feeling calmer it is easier to change your behaviour.



## Think.

Try to reflect on why an argument started. Ask yourself how you were feeling before the conversation started and whether you were already feeling anxious or tense.



## Change.

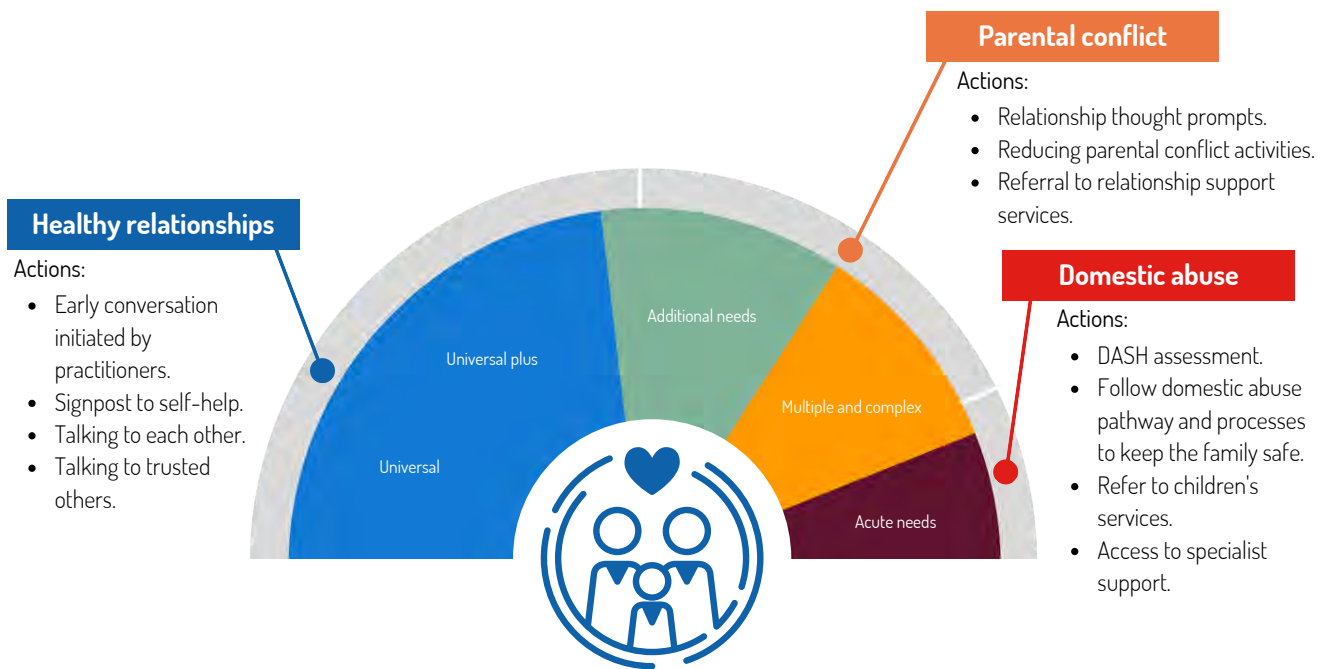
Take a step back. Is this argument about something important or can you come back to it when you are both calmer and you can change your behaviour?



Section 4:

# Bromley Intimate Relationship Spectrum

We have based this on the For Baby's Sake Trust's 'Parental Relationships Spectrum' to assist our families and our practitioners in differentiating whether families are experiencing parental conflict or domestic abuse:



Universal	Universal plus	Additional needs	Multiple and complex	Acute needs
Family are meeting their children's needs with support from universal services.	Family who can meet their children's needs with some additional support - usually in the short term.	Family with a range of needs requiring a partnership response of targeted and coordinated support.	Family need multi-agency safeguarding response, including specialist intervention.	Family have acute needs which require statutory social care and safeguarding protection.

**Source:**  
 For Baby's Sake Trust's 'Parental Relationships Spectrum'  
[www.forbabysake.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/FBS-1017-Parental-Relationships-spectrum-V4.pdf](http://www.forbabysake.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/FBS-1017-Parental-Relationships-spectrum-V4.pdf)

# Domestic abuse



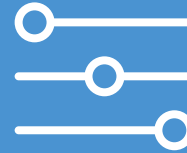
Are you experiencing:



physical  
violence



threatening  
behaviour



controlling  
actions

There is lots of help and support available:

## Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid

- Open Monday to Friday  
9am to 4.30pm
- Call 020 8313 9303
- Email [info@bcwa.org.uk](mailto:info@bcwa.org.uk)
- Visit [www.bcwa.org.uk](http://www.bcwa.org.uk)

## National Domestic Abuse Helpline

- Freephone, 24 hours a day
- Call 0808 2000 247

### Live chat

- Live chat open Monday to  
Friday 3pm to 10pm
- [www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

## Bromley Council

### Adult Social Care

- Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
- Call 020 8461 7777
- Email [adult.early.intervention@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:adult.early.intervention@bromley.gov.uk)

### Children's Social Care

- Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
- Call 020 8461 7373, 020 8461 7379  
or 020 8461 7026
- Email [candfhub@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:candfhub@bromley.gov.uk)

### Outside of working hours

- Call 0300 303 8671

**In an emergency, always call 999**

Section 5:

## Step 1 - Stop



# Stop.

This step is designed to help you to take a moment to stop and think about how healthy your relationship is.

We have a set of three short quizzes.

We would recommend that all parents should start with the same quiz - the child's viewpoint.

Then you can move onto the relationship quiz that fits your situation. There is one quiz for parents who are still together or who are considering separating and a separate quiz for those who have separated.





**1****Action 1 - The child's viewpoint**

We recommend that everyone starts in the same place - by asking your child to complete the child's viewpoint quiz.

This is what everyone - including both parents and professionals - should be focused on. By completing this quiz, you will better understand any thoughts, feelings and concerns that your child has.

This quiz should be completed by every child in the household and relationship.

**2****Action 2 - The parent's viewpoint**

Answer the relevant quiz for your relationship status.

Ideally both parents should complete the quiz, but it can still be useful if just one parent does.

**Quiz 2 -**

Parents who are together or are currently considering separating

**Quiz 3 -**

Parents who are separated

## QUIZ 1

# The child's viewpoint



Stop.

In every family there are times when parents don't get along. This is natural. But we also know that some parents argue more often or with more aggression.

Below are some things that children sometimes think or feel when their parents have arguments or disagreements.

We would like you to think about how you feel when your parents argue or disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. You should just pick the answer which is best for you.

If you can answer all the questions, that's great. But please do not worry if there are some questions that you can't or find difficult answer. Just answer the questions that you can.

Who this quiz is for



This quiz is for any child to complete.

It is aimed at children aged over 8; however, the questions can be tailored towards children aged under 8.

The purpose of this quiz is to help you understand how the child feels. By combining what you learn through this quiz together with the parental quiz, you'll be able to support the child with the most appropriate action.



### Do it online

You can complete this quiz online -

visit [www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub/bromley-parenting-hub-stop-think-change/2](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub/bromley-parenting-hub-stop-think-change/2)



Stop.

### How to use this quiz

The child should be asked to complete the quiz by themselves.

You need to support your child as they complete this quiz.

It is important to make sure that the child does not feel pressured to respond to any particular question with any particular answer. This needs to be their honest opinion.

Please avoid the temptation:

- to answer for them
- to influence their response
- to correct or change

You just need to listen to them.

### Tips.

1

Find a period of uninterrupted time and space

2

Make sure your child is happy to do it - you must not force them

3

Talk your child through the form - reassure them that they should answer honestly

4

Give your child space to answer the quiz

5

Talk to your child about their answers

6

Compare their responses with your parental quiz



How often they argue



How often do your parents argue or disagree?

A lot

Quite a bit

Sometimes

Never

How often do you see your parents arguing or disagreeing?

A lot

Quite a bit

Sometimes

Never

How often do you think your parents argue or disagree when you are not with them?

A lot

Quite a bit

Sometimes

Never

How happy do you think your parents are together?

Very happy

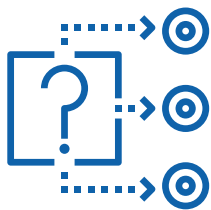
Quite happy

A little unhappy

Very unhappy



# What causes the arguments



## What do your parents usually argue or disagree about?

You can tick as many as you want

<input type="checkbox"/> How to discipline you	<input type="checkbox"/> Money	<input type="checkbox"/> Home chores	<input type="checkbox"/> How to spend time as a family
<input type="checkbox"/> Work	<input type="checkbox"/> How the other parent behaves	<input type="checkbox"/> Small things, like what's for dinner	
<input type="checkbox"/> Family and friends	<input type="checkbox"/> If one parent says 'yes', when the other has told you 'no'		
<input type="checkbox"/> How much to spend on birthdays or presents	<input type="checkbox"/> How to reward you	<input type="checkbox"/> Food and eating	
<input type="checkbox"/> Playing games on electronics	<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol, drugs or smoking	<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling tired	

Something else

Write it here

During the argument



How angry do your parents get when they argue or disagree?

Very angry \*

Quite angry

A little angry

Never angry

Do your parents shout a lot when they argue or disagree?

They shout a lot \*

They shout a bit

They shout sometimes

They never shout

Do your parents say unkind things to each other when they argue or disagree?

Yes - a lot

Quite a bit

Sometimes

Never

Do your parents ask you to take sides when they argue or disagree?

Always

Quite a bit

Sometimes

Never



How you feel



How do you feel when your parents argue or disagree?

Upset <input type="radio"/>	Scared * <input type="radio"/>	Unsafe * <input type="radio"/>	Helpless <input type="radio"/>	Nothing <input type="radio"/>	Something else <input type="radio"/>
--------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------	---

Do you do any of these things when your parents argue or disagree?

I feel sorry for one or both of them <input type="radio"/>	I try to comfort one or both of them <input type="radio"/>
---	---

I try to be really quiet <input type="radio"/>	I hide and feel scared* <input type="radio"/>	I don't know what to do <input type="radio"/>	Something else <input type="radio"/>
---	--	--	---

Do you do feel any of these things when your parents argue or disagree?

I feel caught in the middle <input type="radio"/>	I feel like they are upset with me <input type="radio"/>	I feel like it's my fault <input type="radio"/>	None <input type="radio"/>
--	---	--	-------------------------------

When your parents argue or disagree, are you afraid something bad will happen?

Always <input type="radio"/>	Usually <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
---------------------------------	----------------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------



## After the argument

Do your parents stay angry with each other after they argue or disagree?

Yes - a lot

Quite a bit

Sometimes

Never

Do your parents make up right away after they argue or disagree?

Always

Usually

Sometimes

Never

Do your parents agree on what to do after they argue or disagree about something?

Always

Usually

Sometimes

Never

## What to do next

When you have finished answering the quiz, give the form back to the adult who asked you to fill it in.

The adult will look at what they have learnt through your answers together with the responses in the parental quiz. Using this knowledge, they will be able to identify an appropriate plan of action by spotting opportunities where they can build on your happiness.





# What the results say

1 Start by counting how many answers in this quiz were provided in the three core colours (green, orange and red):

How many green responses?



multiply that number by 5



How many orange responses?



multiply that number by 3



If this is higher than 5, your child appears to be negatively affected

How many red responses?



multiply that number by 1



If this is higher than 3, your child appears to be negatively affected

add all three numbers together and write the total below



see what box your score is in:

**70 or fewer**  
Likely to be an unhealthy relationship which is having a negative impact on your child



Multiple and complex or acute needs

**Between 70 and 84**  
Likely to be a relationship with needs which might be having a negative impact on your child



Additional needs or multiple and complex

**85 or more**  
Likely to be a healthy relationship



Universal or universal plus

Your place on the Bromley Intimate Relationship Spectrum (See page 14)



2

Now we need to consider what themes have emerged:

List below any orange or red responses:

### List orange responses

If there are more than 5 points to add, your child appears to be negatively affected by your relationship

### List red responses

If there are more than 3 points to add, your child appears to be negatively affected by your relationship

### Urgent areas

If any red responses with an \* icon next to them are ticked, please read below to see what you need to do urgently:

- 1 If you are experiencing violence from your partner, call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline for free on **0808 2000 247**
- 2 Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid support victims and survivors, and challenge perpetrators to change their behaviour - simply call **020 8313 9303**
- 3 If you are being abusive towards your partner, call the Respect Phoneline for perpetrators for free on **0808 8024040**



## Do you need to talk to someone?

1 **Talk to someone you like**  
such as a trusted adult, your friends, a teacher or a family member

2 **Call Childline for free on 0800 1111**  
or visit [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)



Childline provide free and confidential help for young people. You can talk to them about anything. No problem is too big or too small. When you call them, you'll get through to a counsellor, they're there to listen and support you with anything you'd like to talk about. Or you can have a 1-2-1 counsellor chat online.

3 **Visit the Kooth website - [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)**

Kooth is an online mental wellbeing community providing free, safe and anonymous support. You can read help articles, write in your own daily journal, start or join a conversation, or chat to the Kooth team.

4 **Text The Signpost on 07480 635 025**

When you are struggling with something, it can be difficult to know which way to turn for help. The Signpost by Bromley Y offers emotional health support and will help you think about what options are available.

This questionnaire is an amended version of the Parental Conflict Questionnaire put together by the Department of Work and Pensions for a number of local authorities to use. This Bromley version has been created with permission using the questionnaires developed by Brighton and Hove City Council (November 2020).

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## QUIZ 2

# Parental Relationship Quiz



Stop.

## For parents who are currently in a relationship or are considering separating

In every relationship there are times when couples argue. These are natural.

But we also know that some parents argue more often or with more aggression. And this has a direct negative impact on the children in the household or relationship.

Who this quiz is for



This quiz is for parents who are still in a relationship, including those who are considering separation. There is a separate quiz for parents who have separated.

Please answer all questions to the best of your ability, even if they do not seem entirely relevant to you.

Your responses will help you to identify relevant support for you and your partner, or to anonymously measure the effectiveness of the relationship course you are attending.

To help you get the most out of the quiz and the wider support available, please answer honestly and openly.



## How to use this quiz

This quiz should be completed by parents who are still together in a relationship.

Each parent should complete this quiz on their own.

Once they have done so, you should talk through your individual answers and viewpoints.

It is important to make sure that you (or the other parent) do not feel pressured to respond to any particular question with any particular answer. This needs to be their honest opinion.

Please avoid the temptation:

- to answer for them
- to influence their response
- to correct or change

You just need to listen to them.

## Tips.



Find a period of uninterrupted time and space



Make sure you are happy to do it - you must not feel forced or made to complete the quiz



Give yourself space to answer the quiz



Share your answers with your partner

How would you rate your relationship with your partner?

On a scale of 0-10

0



10

Things are really bad



Things are really great



## You and your partner

Please think about the times during the last 4 weeks when you and your partner have spent time talking or doing things together.

With those times in mind, please indicate how often your partner acted in the following ways towards you.

During the last 4 weeks, how often did your partner...

	Always	Almost always	About half	Almost never	Never
Let you know they really care about you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Act loving and/or affectionate towards you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Let you know that they appreciate your ideas or the things you do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help you to do something that is important to you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Act supportive and understanding towards you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Criticise you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Argue with you when you disagreed about something	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Get angry at you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shout at you because they were upset with you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## How you deal with relationship issues

The following are a series of statements that describe things people sometimes do and feel when disagreements happen. Indicate how often you do these.

**All relationships have moments of arguments and disagreements.**

How often do you and your partner argue in front of your child?

Always	Almost always	About half	Almost never	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Sometimes it is difficult to keep financial discussions to specific times and places.**

How often would you say you and your partner argue over money in front of your child?

Always	Almost always	About half	Almost never	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**A child will often go to one parent for money or permission to do something after having already been refused by the other parent.**

How often would you say your child tries this with you or your partner?

Always	Almost always	About half	Almost never	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Parents can often disagree on the subject of discipline.**

How often do you and your partner argue over disciplinary problems in front of your child?

Always	Almost always	About half	Almost never	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Parents can often complain about their partner in front of their child.**

How often does your partner complain to you about your behaviour in the home in front of your child? Things like drinking or smoking, nagging or sloppiness.

How often do you complain to your partner about their behaviour in front of your child?

Always	Almost always	About half	Almost never	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Parents can often disagree on the subject of discipline.**

How often do you and your partner argue over disciplinary problems in front of your child?

Always	Almost always	About half	Almost never	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Often arguments can become heated.**

How often do you or your partner display verbal hostility in front of your child?

Always	Almost always	About half	Almost never	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Arguing frequency

How often do you and your partner argue about each of the following topics?

### The child

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Money

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Intimacy and sex

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Chores and responsibilities

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Religious beliefs

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Leisure time

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Alcohol use

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Substance use

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Friends and relatives

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

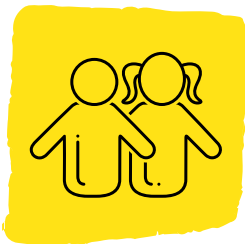
### How you communicate

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Parenting styles and decisions

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





## Children's experiences

Think about your child's responses when there is conflict between you and their other parent. Indicate how you think your child is affected.

	Very often	Often	Rarely	Almost never	Never
Do you think your relationship with your child is affected by conflict between you and your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think your child may feel pressured to take sides when there are disagreements between you and your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think your child picks up on tension at home, for example when one parent gives 'the silent treatment'?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think your child ever wants you and your partner to get on better?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think your child ever blames themselves when there is conflict between you and your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



# Negativity

Do you think conflict in your relationship with your partner has a negative effect on your child's:

### Emotions and mental health

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Behaviour (in and out of school or childcare)

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Ability to concentrate and learn well

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Physical health and wellbeing

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### In the last 4 weeks how often do you think you...

	A lot	Sometimes	Rarely	Almost never	Never
Spoke negatively to your child about your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spoke negatively about your partner when your child was within earshot?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spoke negatively about your partner when your child seemed out of earshot?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Finally, now you have completed the questionnaire, please score your relationship with your partner again

On a scale of 0-10



Things are really bad

Things are really great



**What the results say**

1 Start by counting how many responses were provided in the three core colours (green, orange and red):

How many green responses?



multiply that number by 5



How many orange responses?



multiply that number by 3



If this is higher than 5, your child appears to be negatively affected

How many red responses?



multiply that number by 1



If this is higher than 3, your child appears to be negatively affected

add all three numbers together and write the total below



see what box what score is in:

**49 or fewer**  
Likely to be an unhealthy relationship which is having a negative impact on your child



Multiple and complex or acute needs

**Between 50 and 94**  
Likely to be a relationship with needs which might be having a negative impact on your child



Additional needs or multiple and complex

**95 or more**  
Likely to be a healthy relationship



Universal or universal plus

Your place on the Bromley Intimate Relationship Spectrum (see page 14)



**Stop.**

## Parental Relationship Quiz Parents currently in a relationship

2

Now we need to consider what themes have emerged:

List below any orange or red responses:

### List orange responses

If there are more than 5 points to add, it is likely that your child is being negatively affected by your relationship

### List red responses

If there are more than 3 points to add, your child is likely to be negatively affected by your relationship

### Urgent areas

If any red responses with an \* icon next to them are ticked, please read below to see what you need to do urgently:

- 1 If you are experiencing violence from your partner, call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline for free on **0808 2000 247**
- 2 Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid support victims and survivors, and challenge perpetrators to change their behaviour - simply call **020 8313 9303**
- 3 If you are being abusive towards your partner, call the Respect Phoneline for perpetrators for free on **0808 8024040**

## Do you need to talk to someone?

1 Talk to someone you like  
such as a trusted adult, your friends, a teacher or a family member

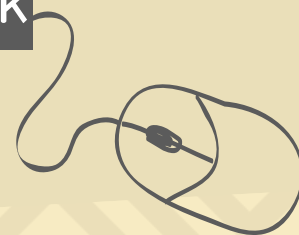
2 Call Family Lives on **0808 800 2222**



Family Lives (previously known as Parentline) offer a confidential and free helpline on all aspects of family life

3 Visit Relate – **www.relate.org.uk**

Relate offer a range of services to help you with your couple and family relationships, whether you're young or old, straight or gay, single or in a relationship



4 Call Talk Together Bromley on **0300 003 3000**

A free NHS evidence-based talking therapy service for people aged 18 years and over, who are anxious, stressed, have low mood or suffer from depression.

This questionnaire is an amended version of the Parental Conflict Questionnaire put together by the Department of Work and Pensions for a number of local authorities to use. This Bromley version has been created with permission using the questionnaires developed by Brighton and Hove City Council (November 2020).

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## QUIZ 3

# Parental Relationship Quiz



Stop.

## For parents who have separated

When parents separate, there are times when the stresses of co-parenting cause arguments and conflict in the relationship. This is natural.

But we also know that sometimes parents who have separated argue more often or with more aggression. And this has a direct negative impact on the children in the relationship.

Who this quiz is for



This quiz is for parents who have separated. There is a separate quiz for parents who are still in a relationship, including those who are considering separation.

Please answer all questions to the best of your ability, even if they do not seem entirely relevant to you.

Your responses will help you to identify relevant support for you and your partner, or to anonymously measure the effectiveness of the relationship course you are attending.

To help you get the most out of the quiz and the wider support available, please answer honestly and openly.

## How to use this quiz

This quiz should be completed by parents who have separated.

It can be completed by one parent or both parents.

It is important to make sure that you do not feel pressured to respond to any particular question with any particular answer. This needs to be your honest opinion.

If your ex-partner agrees to complete the quiz, please avoid the temptation:

- to answer for them
- to influence their response
- to correct or change

If you both complete the survey, you should share your results. This, along with the responses from your child's quiz, will give you a holistic overview of the experience of your child.

## Tips.

1

Find a period of uninterrupted time and space

2

Make sure you are happy to do it - you must not feel forced or made to complete the quiz

3

Give yourself space to answer the quiz

How would you rate your relationship with your ex-partner?

On a scale of 0-10

0



10

Things are really bad



Things are really great



## Ways you communicate

How do you usually communicate with your child's other parent?

	Often	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never - due to: Conflict	Other
Face-to-face	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Over the phone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electronic (texts, emails or online)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often does conflict happen when you communicate in these ways?

	Often	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never - due to: Conflict	Other
Face-to-face	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Over the phone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electronic (texts, emails or online)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When conflict does happen, how often does your child notice?

(such as witnessing it, noticing a tense atmosphere or changes in you)

	Often	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never - due to: Conflict	Other
Face-to-face	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Over the phone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electronic (texts, emails or online)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





## Interacting with each other

Think back over the last 4 weeks, how often does the following occur between you and your child's other parent?

	Never				Always
When you and your child's other parent discuss parenting issues, how often does it lead to an argument?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often is the atmosphere one of hostility and anger?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often are your conversations stressful and tense?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you and your child's other parent have basic differences of opinion about issues related to raising your child or parenting?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When you need help regarding your child, do you ask for it from their other parent?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is your child's other parent helpful to you in raising your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Would you say that you are helpful to your child's other parent in raising your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If your child's other parent needs to make a change to visiting arrangements, do you make a real effort to accommodate (make this work)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your child's other parent make a real effort to accommodate any changes you need to make to visiting arrangements?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel that your child's other parent understands and is supportive of your needs as a parent (whether your child live with you or not)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Areas of agreement and conflict

How frequently do you and your child's other parent argue about each of the following topics:

### The child

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Money

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### New partners

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Parent responsibilities

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Religious beliefs

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Leisure time

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Alcohol use

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Substance use

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Contact arrangements

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### How you communicate

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Parenting styles and decisions

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Think back over the last 4 weeks, how well have you and your child's other parent related in the following ways:

	Very well				Very poorly
How well do you share responsibility for raising your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well do you communicate about your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often do you agree when making decisions about your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How satisfied are you with:

	Very satisfied				Very dissatisfied
The amount of time your child spends with their other parent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How your child spends this time with their other parent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arrangements for child custody (who your child lives with)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arrangements for visitation (with the other parent and relatives)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arrangements for child support (financial)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Children's experiences

In the last 4 weeks how often do you think you...

	A lot	Sometimes	Rarely	Almost never	Never
Spoke negatively to your child about your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spoke negatively about your partner when your child was within earshot?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spoke negatively about your partner when your child seemed out of earshot?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Think about your child(ren)'s responses when there is conflict between you and their other parent.

	Very often	Often	Rarely	Almost never	Never
Do you think your relationship with your child is affected by conflict between you and your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think your child may feel pressured to take sides when there are disagreements between you and your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think your child picks up on tension at home, for example when one parents gives 'the silent treatment'?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think your child ever wants you and your partner to get on better?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think your child ever blames themselves when there is conflict between you and your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Negativity

Do you think conflict in your relationship with your child's other parent has a negative effect on your child(ren)'s:

### Emotions and mental health

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Behaviour (in and out of school or childcare)

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Ability to concentrate and learn well

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Physical health and wellbeing

Always	Quite a lot	Hardly ever	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Rating review

Finally, now you have completed the questionnaire, please score your relationship with your ex-partner again

On a scale of 0-10

0 10

Things are really bad ← → Things are really great



### What the results say

1 Start by counting how many responses were provided in the three core colours (green, orange and red):

How many green responses?



multiply that number by 5



How many orange responses?



multiply that number by 3



How many red responses?



multiply that number by 1



If this is higher than 5, your child appears to be negatively affected

If this is higher than 3, your child appears to be negatively affected

add all three numbers together and write the total below



see what box what score is in:

**79 or fewer**  
Likely to be an unhealthy relationship which is having a negative impact on your child



Multiple and complex or acute needs

**Between 80 and 124**  
Likely to be a relationship with needs which might be having a negative impact on your child



Additional needs or multiple and complex

**125 or more**  
Likely to be a healthy relationship



Universal or universal plus

Your place on the Bromley Intimate Relationship Spectrum (see page 14)



2

Now we need to consider what themes have emerged:

List below any orange or red responses:

**List orange responses**

If there are more than 5 points to add, it is likely that your child is being negatively affected by your relationship

**List red responses**

If there are more than 3 points to add, your child is likely to be negatively affected by your relationship

**Urgent areas**

If any red responses with an \* icon next to them are ticked, please read below to see what you need to do urgently:

- 1 If you are experiencing violence from your partner, call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline for free on **0808 2000 247**
- 2 Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid support victims and survivors, and challenge perpetrators to change their behaviour - simply call **020 8313 9303**
- 3 If you are being abusive towards your partner, call the Respect Phoneline for perpetrators for free on **0808 8024040**



Stop.

## Parental Relationship Quiz Couples who are together

### Do you need to talk to someone?

1

**Talk to someone you like**

such as a trusted adult, your friends, a teacher or a family member

2

**Call Family Lives on 0808 800 2222**

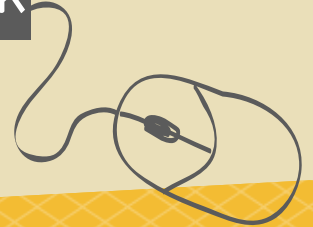


Family Lives (previously known as Parentline) offer a confidential and free helpline on all aspects of family life

3

**Visit Relate - www.relate.org.uk**

Relate offer a range of services to help you with your couple and family relationships, whether you're young or old, straight or gay, single or in a relationship



4

**Call Talk Together Bromley on 0300 003 3000**

A free NHS evidence-based talking therapy service for people aged 18 years and over, who are anxious, stressed, have low mood or suffer from depression.

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## Step 2 - Think

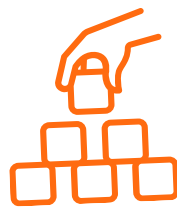


# Think.

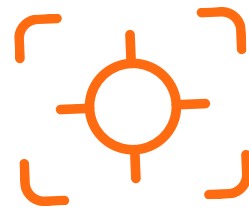
Use the results from the quiz to think about your strengths and what needs to change.

Understanding the health of your current relationship is essential to understanding what you can do to move forward.

We recommend taking a moment to stop and think about your relationship so that you identify:



the strengths and positives that you can build upon



the areas that need your time, energy and focus

# 3

## Action 3 - Use our self-help guides

We have developed a set of 10 Relationship Thought Prompts (RTP) to help you think about the simple actions that you can take to continue to make your relationship healthy.

These focus on different areas of your relationship. Use the results from Step 1 (Stop) to identify which ones are the most relevant to you.

RTP	Theme				
	Impact on your child	Your relationship	Communicating together	Connecting with your partner	Conflict and arguments
RTP01	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RTP02	✓	✓			
RTP03	✓	✓		✓	
RTP04	✓		✓	✓	
RTP05	✓		✓		
RTP06	✓	✓	✓		
RTP07	✓	✓		✓	
RTP08	✓	✓	✓		
RTP09	✓				✓
RTP10	✓				✓

# 4

## Action 4 - Activities and things that can help

We have a library of tools and advice for specific elements that the quiz may identify. These can help you think through any issues that you have identified and then identify the solutions.

Activity	Theme					
	Impact on your child	Family relationships	Behaviours on show	Communicating together	Action planning	Breaking up
#01	✓	✓			✓	
#02	✓	✓			✓	
#03	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
#04	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
#05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
#06	✓		✓	✓	✓	
#07	✓	✓	✓		✓	
#08	✓		✓	✓	✓	
#09	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

# Keeping the child at the heart

When parents are arguing, it's easy for the child to get put in the middle and made to feel uncomfortable.

Here are a few signs to watch out for and steps to take if you recognise any of them.





## Badmouthing your partner

### TRY NOT TO...

Talk badly about your partner (or ex partner) in front of your children - or retaliate if you hear that your partner is talking about you.

### INSTEAD...

Focus on your child's needs. Protect your children from the conversation. Vent with another adult or talk to your partner away from your child.



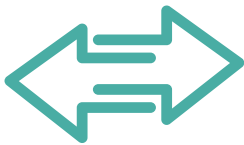
## Competing to be the favourite

### TRY NOT TO...

Feel that you have to be seen as the favourite parent or enter into a rivalry or competition with your partner (or ex partner).

### INSTEAD...

Focus on your child's needs. Remember a child's love for one parent doesn't diminish their love for the other.



## Asking your child to be a mediator

### TRY NOT TO...

Ask your child to share messages between you and your partner (or ex partner) or be the 'go between' with bickering and arguing.

### INSTEAD...

Focus on your child's needs. Develop clear and respectful communication directly with your partner in a way that works for you both.



## Controlling or stopping access

### TRY NOT TO...

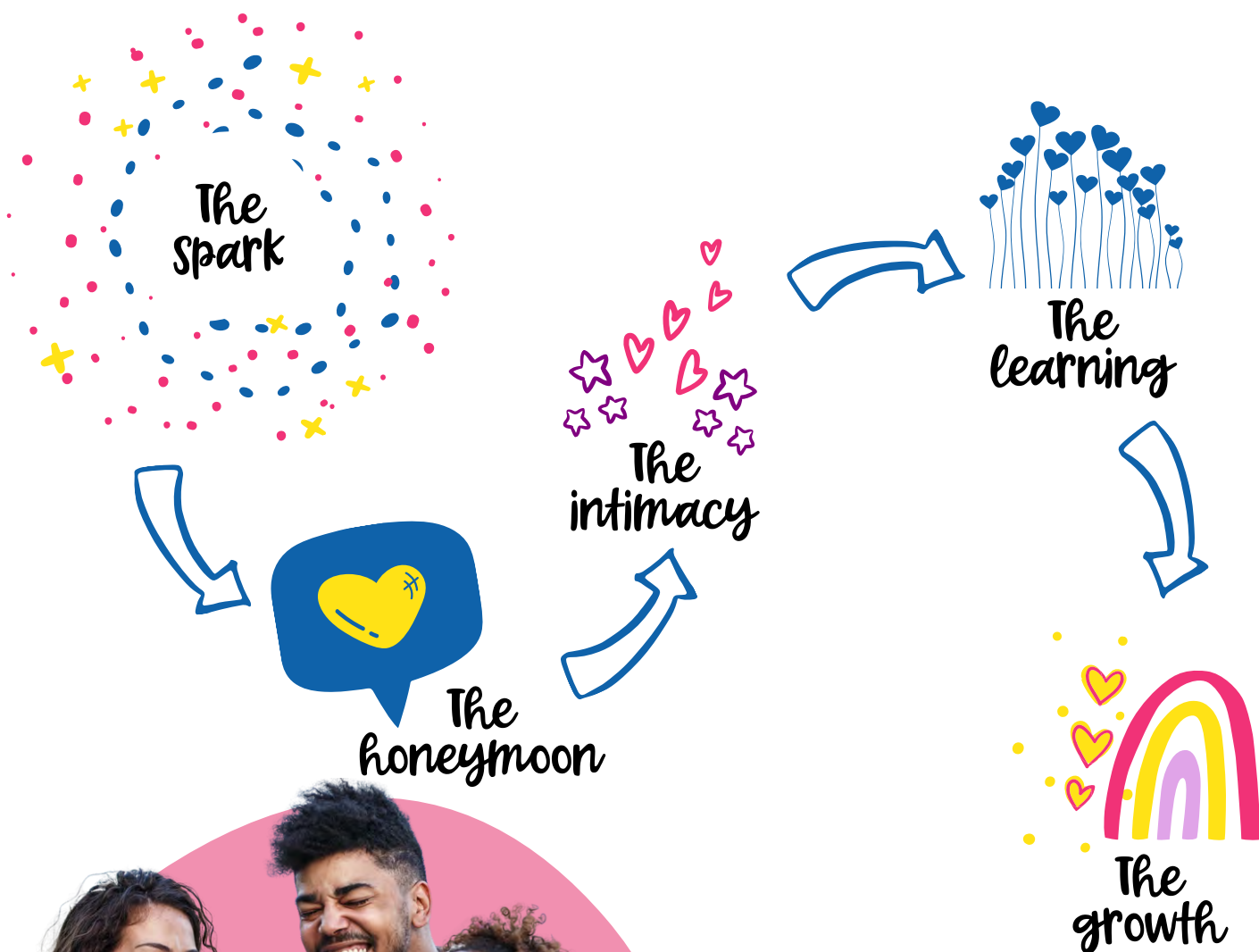
Stop your child seeing their other parent, to seek to control their time together or to negatively influence their relationship.

### INSTEAD...

Focus on your child's needs. Allow your child and their other parent to maintain and develop their relationship in ways that suit them and the wider family network.

# The relationship journey

Over time all relationships change. They journey through a number of relationship phases.



You will change phases throughout your life. As you experience challenge and positive moments together, you move through the different phases. What's more, you won't always be in the same phase as your partner. But open, honest and trusting discussions will help you manage these differences.

### The spark

The start of the relationship, where both you and your partner realise that you like and are attracted to each other.

You want to spend all your time together. You have fun together and start to learn about each other.

### The honeymoon

A blissful time where you and your partner are happy and comfortable with each other. It's exciting to be together.

### The intimacy

Spending more time together you become increasingly more connected and committed to each other.



### The learning

You understand each other more, both individually and collectively. You better understand your roles in the relationship and the compromises you need to make as individuals and as partners.

### The growth

When you love each other completely and you move forward together as a single unit. You love each other, respect each other and trust each other.



# Relational journey: parental relationship impact mapping

Relationships can shift and evolve over time. It is important to understand when relationships move from healthy to unhealthy or even abusive. This guide will help you understand where your relationship is at the moment.





**Relationship style**



A healthy and respectful relationship



An unhealthy relationship of conflict and distress



An abusive relationship of fear and risk

**What behaviours you have**

Respect. Equality. Honesty. Co-operation. Trust.

Inconsistent respect and co-operation.

Arguing. Inconsistency. Isolation.

Shouting. Screaming. Violence. Conflict.

Violence. Conflict. Stress. Worry.

Control. Abuse. Fear.

**What it looks like**

Open communication. Tricky moments are resolved constructively.

Reduced communication. Difficulties ignored. Arguing and unhappiness.

Frequent conflict and arguments. Parents emotionally unavailable.

Conflict and abuse. Unresolved conflict. Inconsistent pattern.

Controlling and abusive interactions. Arguments and stress.

Coercive control. Physical harm. Fear of violence or death.

**What your child experiences**

Constructive resolution skills. Emotional control. Respect and equality.

Reduced emotional wellbeing. Distress and concerns.

Toxic environment. Reduced connections. Feeling isolated and alone.

Emotional health worries. Concern and worry. Uncertainty in situations.

Fear and stress. Negative emotional health.

Risk of significant harm. Trauma and fear. Belief that abuse is normal.

**What help and support is available**

Self help. Children and family centres. Community services.

Children and family centres. Bromley Children Project. Community services.

Family assessment from Bromley Children Project. Relationship support.

Family assessment from Bromley Children Project. Domestic abuse advice.

Domestic abuse pathway. Children's social care.

Domestic abuse services. Children's social care. Police and emergency care.

# The importance of talking

Communication is important in relationships. You need to talk openly and be good listeners. It is better to act early if you are having difficulties, rather than waiting for the situation to get worse.

Use our tips to make sure you are prioritising talking in your relationship.



Tip 1

Understand how you communicate



Tip 2

Be clear and check



Tip 3

Two ears.  
Two eyes.  
One mouth.



Tip 4

Make space and be honest





Tip 1

**Understand  
how you  
communicate**

- It takes two people to have a relationship and each person has different communication needs and styles.
- Couples need to find a way of communicating that suits their relationship.
- Healthy communication styles require practice and hard work.
- Remember, communication will never be perfect all the time.



Tip 2

**Be clear  
and check**

- Be clear when communicating with your partner, so that your message can be received and understood.
- Double check your understanding of what your partner is saying.
- Negotiate and remember that you don't have to be right all the time.
- If the issue you are having is not that important, try to let the issue go, or agree to disagree.



Tip 3

**Two ears.  
Two eyes.  
One mouth.**

- You have two ears and two eyes, and one mouth - give them the right priority.
- Listen to your partner. Put aside your own thoughts. Try to understand their intentions, feelings, needs and wants
- When we communicate, we can say a lot without speaking. Our body posture, tone of voice and the expressions on our face all convey a message.
- These non-verbal means of communicating can tell the other person how we feel about them.



Tip 4

**Make space  
and  
be honest**

- Set aside time to talk without interruption from other people or distractions like phones, computers or television.
- Think about what you want to say and talk about what is happening and how it affects you.
- Talk about what you want, need and feel - use 'I' statements such as 'I need', 'I want' and 'I feel'.
- Accept responsibility for your own feelings.

# The importance of listening

Listening is a very important part of effective communication. A good listener can encourage their partner to talk openly and honestly.

Use our tips to make sure you are practicing good listening.



Open and receptive body language



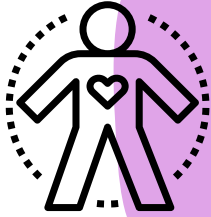
Create the right space





## Listen and engage actively

- Keep comfortable eye contact (where culturally appropriate).
- Lean towards the other person.
- Make gestures to show interest and concern.
- Listen to learn not to respond.



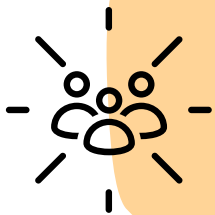
## Open and receptive body language

- Have an open, non-defensive, fairly relaxed posture with your arms and legs uncrossed.
- Face the other person – don't sit or stand sideways.
- Sit or stand on the same level to avoid looking up to or down on the other person.



## Create the right space

- Avoid distracting gestures, such as fidgeting with a pen or tapping your feet.
- Be aware that physical barriers, noise or interruptions will make good communication difficult.
- Mute telephones or other communication devices to ensure you are really listening.



## Stay focussed and in control

- Be prepared to take time out if you are feeling really angry about something.
- It might be better to calm down before you address the issue.
- Talk using the future and present tense, not the past tense.
- Concentrate on the major problem, and don't get distracted by other minor problems.

# Keeping the positivity

Even the happiest and most settled couples have moments of challenge and negativity.

Some behaviours can make negative names more challenging and difficult. There are a few things that you can do to keep the positivity.



Positive actions

+



Positive thoughts

=

Positive outcomes

+



Positive communication





To stay positive you can try:

- laughing together
- supporting each other
- showing interest in each other
- listening to each other
- being grateful
- giving thoughtful gift
- hugging and being affectionate
- sharing positive memories



Thinking positive thoughts, such as:

- what brought you together in the first place?
- what keeps you together now?
- what good times have you had together?



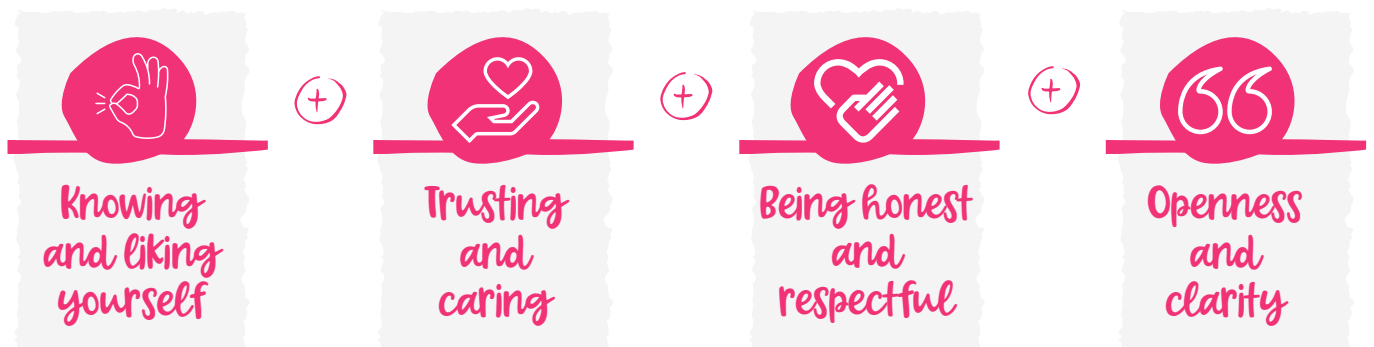
Keep the dialogue positive by:

- starting sentences with "I..."
- paying each other compliments
- seeing things from each other's point of view
- being good to yourself
- avoiding criticism, contempt, defensiveness and shutting down

# Building the emotional intimacy

Intimacy involves feelings of emotional closeness and connectedness with your partner. Intimate relationships are often characterised by attitudes of mutual trust, caring, and acceptance. Children learn about intimacy from those around them.

These four factors will help you to build an emotionally intimate relationship:







### Knowing and liking yourself

The initial step toward intimacy with others is getting to know and like yourself.

By coming to know and value yourself, you identify your innermost feelings and needs and develop the security to share them with others.



### Trusting and caring

When trust exists, partners feel secure that disclosing intimate feelings will not lead to ridicule, rejection, or other harm.

Caring is an emotional bond that allows intimacy to develop. When people care about each other, they seek to fulfill each other's needs and interests.



### Being honest and respectful

Honesty is a feature of intimacy. Consider what you need to be honest about and what you would like your partners to be honest about.

Try to provide important information in a way that is concise and respectful to both your partner and yourself.



### Openness and clarity

Communication is a two-way street that embraces sending and receiving messages.

It is important when communicating with someone to listen not only to their words but also to their non-verbal cues. These provide valuable clues to feelings.

### Questions to help build intimacy

Try taking some time to talk about your answers to the following questions:

If you could choose the activities to do that would make a perfect day, what would you choose? And why?

What do you like best about our relationship?

What's the one thing about yourself that you like the most?

What are the five things that you are most thankful for right now?

What was the first thing about me that attracted you?

If you could plan the perfect date with me, what would that include?

Do you see yourself or me in our kid(s)? If so, how?

What do you dream about the most often?

When you think about the future, what do you imagine?

# Keeping arguments healthy

There are points in every relationship when difficult conversations are needed. How you behave in these conversations has an impact on how healthy your arguments remain.

## Healthy arguments are good for your relationship

- ✓ Work together.
- ✓ Be affectionate.
- ✓ Understand differences.
- ✓ Seek solutions.

## Unhealthy arguments are bad for your relationship

- ✗ The blame game.
- ✗ Name-calling.
- ✗ Trying to win.
- ✗ Focusing on negatives.





## Starting difficult conversations

Start softly. Use language which doesn't push the blame on to your partner. This will help them to listen and hear what you are saying.



## Staying positive



Focus on what you love about each other. Start sentences with "I..." to share how you feel rather than pushing criticism onto your partner. This will help keep the discussions positive.



## Focusing on solutions

Talk to each other using an open and honest approach. Focus on pragmatic solutions that you can put in place both individually and jointly.



## Thinking openly



When talking, think beyond the current situation. Consider how you feel away from this moment. Keep thinking about this to help see past the here and now.



# Is it parental conflict or an unhealthy relationship?

Over time all relationships change through a number of relationship phases. It's important to know when conflict changes from healthy to unhealthy.

## The signs of parental conflict in a healthy relationship

My partner respects me when I say no or disagree



My partner is proud of me when I achieve something



My partner doesn't rush our relationship; we can take it slow



My partner can talk about their feelings with me



My partner doesn't cheat on me, and trusts me not to cheat on them



My partner treats me with respect, no matter where we are or who we're with



My partner is comfortable with me spending time away from them, with family and other friends



# Get to know the signs of an unhealthy relationship

My partner makes me feel like giving up on my own opinions and believe that my partner is right about everything

My partner does not respect me when I say no or disagree

My partner makes me feel a lot more critical of myself — thinking I am stupid or fat or very lucky to have a partner

My partner makes threats and does things just to scare me

My partner cheats on me or accuses me of cheating on them

My partner makes me feel pressured to change who I am or move the relationship further than I want to

My partner makes me feel guilty if I don't spend time with them

My partner wants to know where I am all the time

There are many ways that you can ask for help and support.

These could include:

- Talk to your partner - tell them how you feel
- Talk to a trusted family member or friend
- Contact the Bromley Children Project (020 8461 7259)
- Contacting Bromley & Croydon Women's Aid (020 8313 9303)
- Call Victim Support (08 08 16 89 111)
- Call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline (0808 2000 247)

Or visit

[www.bromley.gov.uk/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-1/2](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-1/2)

# Taking the conflict out of the argument

All arguments have an element of conflict. Managing the level of conflict is essential to keeping an argument healthy and under control.



**Phase 1****Sparking the argument****Ask yourself:**

How did the argument start?

Was it fanned by small actions, such as:

- using an aggressive or confrontational tone of voice?
- feeling tired or stressed?
- not listening to each other?
- bringing up past issues?

**Phase 2****Extending the argument****Ask yourself:**

How do you act during an argument?

Do you:

- bottle things up and then have a rant?
- get overwhelmed by your feelings?
- sulk or give the silent treatment?
- keep baiting and going at your partner?

These actions tend to fan the conflict.

**Phase 3****Stepping backwards****What you can do:**

By taking a few actions you can step back and reduce the conflict.

During an argument you can try:

- taking a break
- listening to your partner
- saying sorry
- offering affection

**Phase 4****Moving forwards****What you can do:**

Stay focused on the positives.

Think about:

- what brought you together in the first place?
- what keeps you together now?
- what good times have you had together?

keep these in your mind and focus on them rather than the argument.

# The impact on your child

This activity will help you to identify the impact of your relationship on your child.

Everyone argues at times. When it's constant or is not dealt with it can build up overtime. This will have a negative impact on your child. Knowing what to look for is important. Alongside 'The Child's Viewpoint' quiz, this activity will help you to consider how much your relationship is impacting on your child.

## How to use this tool

- 1** Ask and support your child to complete 'The Child's Viewpoint' quiz.
- 2** Read through the signs below and tick any that you believe that your child is displaying - and use the comments spaces to add more details for your responses.
- 3** Share your responses with your partner - and ask them to share their responses with you - if it is safe to do so.
- 4** Look at the areas where you agree and the areas where you disagree along with what your child has answered in this quiz.
- 5** Use this knowledge to consider what actions you need to take - both individually and jointly.



## The child's viewpoint

Did your child highlight any issues in their quiz? If so, make a note of the areas here

How often do they feel you and your partner argue?

What do they feel you argue about?

How do they feel when you and your partner argue?

How do they feel you and your partner deal move on from the argument?

## Thinking about your child, do you see any of these things?

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being negatively affected, there could be other things happening too. It is important to put the whole picture together.

	Never	Sometimes	A lot
Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Becoming withdrawn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeming anxious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Becoming uncharacteristically aggressive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Add details for your answers here:



## What have you learnt?

Has anything surprised you? Has anything disappointed you? Have you spotted any unknown strengths or positives? Write down what you learnt.



## What do you need to do or change?

Write down a few actions that you need to take, either individually or together.

## Activity

#02

# Your family values

This activity will help you to identify the values that guide you as an individual and a family.

Values are very important in parenting since they deeply influence all behaviours and attitudes and effect our decisions and relationships. For a value to be truly your own, you must act on it and your behaviour must reflect it – not just verbally accept it or think that you should follow it. In this activity you will identify your core family values.

### How to use this tool

- 1 Identify four to six core values that drive you as an individual.
- 2 Consider how much these are currently replicated in your family.
- 3 Share your responses with your partner – and ask them to share their responses with you.
- 4 Look at the areas where you agree and the areas where you disagree.
- 5 Use this knowledge to consider what actions you need to take – both individually and jointly.



## The benefits of values

Values provide clarity as parents are more effective and clear when they know what they value for themselves and how those values influence what they want for their children. The more conscious parents are of the values they wish to transmit and the more they know about effective ways of transmitting them, the more likely it is that their children will learn and incorporate those values.

Values also provide guidance. They focus the parenting choices you make, help you to guide your children, determine what messages you want to send and what behaviours and attitudes you want to reinforce.

They also help you pick your battles, decide what is worth your time and attention, and what you can let go of.



## Your values

Now think about your values. What are they? How can you capture them in words? Write them below:

1

2

3

4

5

6



## Shared values

Make a note of any values that you share with your partner - this can form the foundation for your family values.

1

2

3

4



## Our family values

Write down four to six values that you agree upon. Why not cut them out and stick them up at home?

1

2

3

4

5

6



## What have you learnt?

Has anything surprised you? Has anything disappointed you? Have you spotted any unknown strengths or positives? Write down what you learnt.



## What do you need to do or change?

Write down a few actions that you need to take, either individually or together.

## Activity

#03

# Positive and negative acts: constructive or destructive behaviours

This activity will help you to identify the positive and negative elements in your relationship.

In every relationship, both partners will act in ways in that can be positive (or constructive) for their family and also in ways that are negative (or destructive). During this activity you will think through the moments when you act in these ways – both as an individual and as a partnership.

## How to use this tool

1

Cut out the behaviour cards and decide whether they fall within positive or negative behaviours – place them in two piles [positive and negative]

2

Think about whether you recognise the behaviour in yourself, in your partner and in your relationship

3

Share your responses with your partner – and ask them to share their responses with you.

4

Look at the areas where you agree and the areas where you disagree.

5

Use this knowledge to consider what actions you need to take – both individually and jointly.





## Cut out the cards

### Being respectful

Treating the other person the way you would like to be treated

### Acting with control

Trying to control the other person

### Scoring points

Always wanting to 'win' discussions and arguments.

### Using "I" messages

Owning your own feelings - not blaming someone else

### Building trust

Saying what you mean and meaning what you say

### Talking critically

Being critical of the other person directly to them or someone else

### Searching for problems

Asking questions to uncover what might be hidden

### Taking turns

Sharing equal access and proactively sharing things

### Bringing it up

Continuing to use historic events, actions or comments

### Being the loudest

Shouting and screaming over the other person to be heard

### The cold iron

Taking time out when things get heated

### The big stuff

Focusing on the bigger issues and letting the small things slide

### Learning

Thinking about what you can do differently in the future

### Reaching out

Saying sorry or making a peace offering

### Keeping it hidden

Maintaining secrets and hiding feelings, thoughts and worries

## Positive acts

Put the positive cards here

## Negative acts

Put the negative cards here

List any positive acts that you recognise in your relationship

List any negative acts that you recognise in your relationship



## What have you learnt?

Has anything surprised you? Has anything disappointed you? Have you spotted any unknown strengths or positives? Write down what you learnt.



## What do you need to do or change?

Write down a few actions that you need to take, either individually or together.

## Activity

#04

# The break down: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

This activity will help you to understand the four stages that relationships tend to go through when they are breaking down.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse is a metaphor depicting the end of times in the New Testament. In relationships these are described as: Criticism, Contempt, Defensiveness and Stonewalling. Being able to identify them in your relationship is a necessary first step to eliminating them and replacing them with healthy, productive communication patterns.

### How to use this tool

- 1 Read through the four phases.
- 2 Think about whether you recognise the behaviour in yourself, in your partner and in your relationship.
- 3 Share your responses with your partner - and ask them to share their responses with you.
- 4 Look at the areas where you agree and the areas where you disagree.
- 5 Use this knowledge to consider what actions you need to take - both individually and jointly.

Based on the model developed by John Gottman and The Gottman Institute (2014).  
Visit [www.gottman.com/blog/the-four-horsemen-recognizing-criticism-contempt-defensiveness-and-stonewalling](http://www.gottman.com/blog/the-four-horsemen-recognizing-criticism-contempt-defensiveness-and-stonewalling).



## Horseman 1 - Criticism

Criticising your partner is different than offering a critique or voicing a complaint. The latter two are about specific issues, whereas the former is a personal attack. It is an attack on your partner at the core of their character. In effect, you are dismantling their whole being when you criticise.

If you find that you and your partner are critical of each other, don't assume your relationship is doomed to fail.

The problem with criticism is that, when it becomes pervasive, it paves the way for the other, far deadlier horsemen to follow. It makes the victim feel assaulted, rejected, and hurt, and often causes the perpetrator and victim to fall into an escalating pattern where the first horseman reappears with greater and greater frequency and intensity, which eventually leads to contempt.

### The antidote - Gentle Start-Up

A complaint focuses on a specific behaviour, but criticism attacks a person's very character. The antidote for criticism is to complain without blame by using a soft or gentle start-up. Avoid saying "you," which can indicate blame, and instead talk about your feelings using "I" statements and express what you need in a positive way.

To put it simply, think of these two things to formulate your soft start-up: What do I feel? What do I need?

Notice that the antidote starts with "I feel," leads into "I need," and then respectfully asks to fulfill that need. There's no blame or criticism, which prevents the discussion from escalating into an argument.



## Horseman 2 - Contempt

When we communicate in this state, we are truly mean - we treat others with disrespect, mock them with sarcasm, ridicule, call them names, and mimic or use body language such as eye-rolling or scoffing. The target of contempt is made to feel despised and worthless.

Contempt goes far beyond criticism. While criticism attacks your partner's character, contempt assumes a position of moral superiority over them. It is fuelled by long-simmering negative thoughts about the partner - which come to a head when the perpetrator attacks the accused from a position of relative superiority.

Most importantly, contempt is the single greatest predictor of divorce. It must be eliminated.

### The antidote - Build a culture of appreciation and respect

One of our mottos is 'Small Things Often': if you regularly express appreciation, gratitude, affection, and respect for your partner, you'll create a positive perspective in your relationship that acts as a buffer for negative feelings. The more positive you feel, the less likely that you'll feel or express contempt.

Another way that we explain this is our discovery of the 5:1 "magic ratio" of positive to negative interactions that a relationship must have to succeed. If you have five or more positive interactions for every one negative interaction, then you're making regular deposits into your emotional bank account, which keeps your relationship in the green.

## Horseman 3 - Defensiveness



This is typically a response to criticism. When we feel unjustly accused, we fish for excuses and play the innocent victim so that our partner will back off. Unfortunately, this strategy is almost never successful. Our excuses just tell our partner that we don't take their concerns seriously and that we won't take responsibility for our mistakes.

This partner not only responds defensively, but they reverse blame in an attempt to make it the other partner's fault. Instead, a non-defensive response can express acceptance of responsibility, admission of fault, and understanding of your partner's perspective.

This approach will only escalate the conflict if the critical spouse does not back down or apologise as this is really a way of blaming your partner, and it won't allow for healthy conflict management.

### The antidote - Take responsibility

Defensiveness is really a way of blaming your partner. You're saying that the problem isn't me, it's you. As a result, the problem is not resolved and the conflict escalates further. The antidote is to accept responsibility, even if only for part of the conflict.

By taking responsibility for part of the conflict (trying to leave too early), even while asserting that they don't like to be late, this partner prevents the conflict from escalating by admitting their role in the conflict. From here, this couple can work towards a compromise.

## Horseman 4 - Stonewalling



This is usually a response to contempt. Stonewalling occurs when the listener withdraws from the interaction, shuts down, and simply stops responding to their partner. Rather than confronting the issues with their partner, people who stonewall disengage.

It takes time for the negativity created by the first three horsemen to become overwhelming enough that stonewalling becomes an understandable "out," but when it does, it frequently becomes a bad habit. It is a result of feeling physiologically flooded, and when we stonewall, we may not even be in a physiological state where we can discuss things rationally.

If you feel like you're stonewalling during a conflict, stop the discussion and ask your partner to take a break. Return to the conversation once you feel ready.

### The antidote - Physiological self-soothing

Through physiologically soothing, you can take the heat out of the argument. Arguing increases heart rates, releases stress hormones into the bloodstream, and can even trigger a fight-or-flight response.

The antidote to stonewalling is to practice physiological self-soothing, and the first step of self-soothing is to stop the conflict discussion and call a timeout. If you don't take a break, you'll find yourself either stonewalling and bottling up your emotions, or you'll end up exploding at your partner, or both, and neither will get you anywhere good.

When you take a break, it should last at least twenty minutes because it will take that long before your body physiologically calms down. Spend your time doing something soothing and distracting, like listening to music, reading, or exercising.

### Do you see any signs in yourself?



Horseman 1 - Criticism



Horseman 2 - Contempt



Horseman 3 - Defensiveness



Horseman 4 - Stonewalling

### Do you see any signs in partner?



Horseman 1 - Criticism



Horseman 2 - Contempt



Horseman 3 - Defensiveness



Horseman 4 - Stonewalling

## Do you see any signs in relationship?



Horseman 1 - Criticism



Horseman 2 - Contempt



Horseman 3 - Defensiveness



Horseman 4 - Stonewalling

## Summarise what you have identified:



Horseman 1 - Criticism



Horseman 2 - Contempt



Horseman 3 - Defensiveness



Horseman 4 - Stonewalling





## What have you learnt?

Has anything surprised you? Has anything disappointed you? Have you spotted any unknown strengths or positives? Write down what you learnt.



## What do you need to do or change?

Write down a few actions that you need to take, either individually or together.

## Activity

#05

# Weighing the baggage

This activity will help you to think through your past experiences and the impact this is having on you now.

What you do and how you do it is influenced significantly by your past, your childhood and your experiences as an adult. This 'baggage' has helped you become the person you are today. Some of it makes you more resilient and others will make you more vulnerable.

## How to use this tool

- 1 Read through the three parts of the model and consider what is included in your baggage.
- 2 Consider the events that have happened and how you communicate individually and as a partnership.
- 3 Share your responses with your partner - and ask them to share their responses with you.
- 4 Look at the areas where you have similarities and the areas where you have differences.
- 5 Use this knowledge to consider what actions you need to take - both individually and jointly.



Based on the Vulnerability Stress Adaptation Model developed by Benjamin Karney and Thomas Bradbury (2012).  
Visit [www.researchgate.net/figure/The-vulnerability-stress-adaptation-model-of-marriage-Karney-Bradbury-1995\\_fig5\\_6231234](http://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-vulnerability-stress-adaptation-model-of-marriage-Karney-Bradbury-1995_fig5_6231234).

## The stuff you bring with you

### The enduring vulnerabilities

These are personal traits and past experiences that each person brings to the relationship. Remember, some people may not readily disclose this information.



## Stressful stuff happens

### Stressful events

These can be things like having a child, becoming unemployed, illness or bereavement



## How we communicate

### Adaptive processes

The things you do to communicate, behave and cope during stressful events and ways to resolve conflict



## Relationship quality

### The quality of your relationship

What is the quality of your relationship?  
How healthy does it feel?  
Are there any obvious challenges?



## Impact

### The affect of your baggage

Is the quality of your relationship affected by the baggage that you have identified?





## What have you learnt?

Has anything surprised you? Has anything disappointed you? Have you spotted any unknown strengths or positives? Write down what you learnt.



## What do you need to do or change?

Write down a few actions that you need to take, either individually or together.

## Activity

#06

# Inside of you

## Your thoughts, feelings and behaviours

This activity will help you to think about how your thoughts, feelings and behaviours influence your relationship.

It will help you to recognise how you internalise behaviour which in turn affects how you feel, act and respond as an individual and as a partnership. It is built on an understanding that behaviours are shaped by your own thoughts and feelings, and that these can become a cycle, whether positive or negative.

### How to use this tool

1

Identify an example from your own life and note down the key points in the four boxes.

2

Share your responses with your partner - and ask them to share their responses with you.

3

Look at the areas where you have similarities and the areas where you have differences.

4

Use this knowledge to consider what actions you need to take - both individually and jointly.

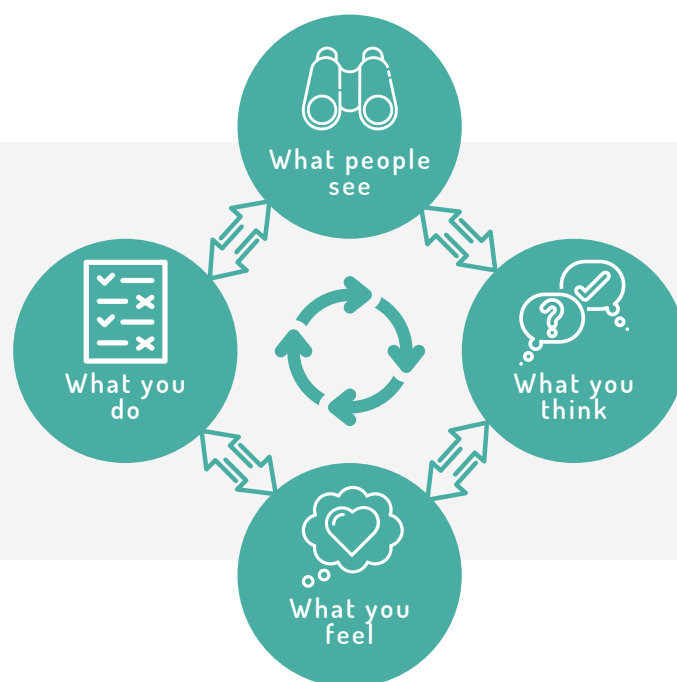


Based on the Introduction to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy model by David Westbrook, Helen Kennerley and Joan Kirk (2007).  
Visit [www.harleytherapy.co.uk/counselling/what-is-cognitive-behavioural-therapy-cbt.htm](http://www.harleytherapy.co.uk/counselling/what-is-cognitive-behavioural-therapy-cbt.htm).

## Your thoughts, feelings and behaviours form a loop

When your thoughts are negative, you feel negative, and you take negative action, which causes more negative thoughts, and the cycle continues.

This loop becomes a repetitive and increasingly negative cycle.



### Here's an example:



What people see

#### What people see

When you ignore me when you're watching TV



What you think

#### What you think

I think this means you don't want to be around me



What you feel

#### What you feel

This makes me feel unloved



What you do

#### What you do

I slam the doors to let you know I am unhappy

Identify an example from your life:



What people see

Empty rectangular box for writing an example of what people see.



What you think

Empty rectangular box for writing an example of what you think.



What you feel

Empty rectangular box for writing an example of what you feel.



What you do

Empty rectangular box for writing an example of what you do.





## What have you learnt?

Has anything surprised you? Has anything disappointed you? Have you spotted any unknown strengths or positives? Write down what you learnt.



## What do you need to do or change?

Write down a few actions that you need to take, either individually or together.

# The behavioural iceberg

This activity will help you to consider what is happening 'below the surface' which influences how you behave.

The tool is built on the iceberg theory. We know that an iceberg has only 10% of its total mass above the water while 90% is underwater. But that 90% is what the ocean currents act on, and what creates the iceberg's behaviour at its tip. Personal and relationship behaviours can be seen in the same way.

## How to use this tool

1

Use the iceberg to reflect what is happening inside of you that other people may not see, experience or know.

2

Share your responses with your partner - and ask them to share their responses with you.

3

Look at the areas where you have similarities and the areas where you have differences.

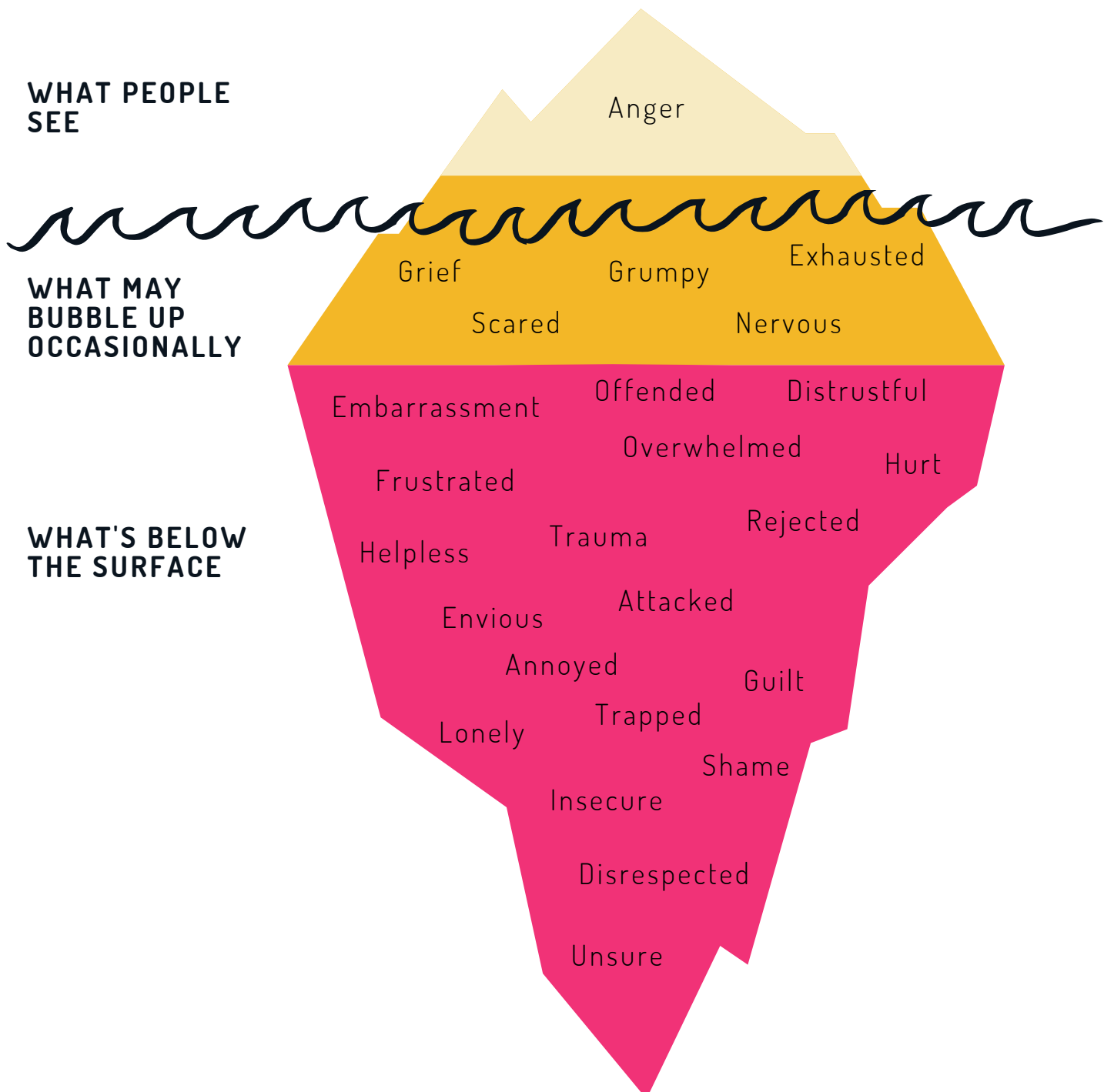
4

Use this knowledge to consider what actions you need to take - both individually and jointly.



## An example: The Anger Iceberg

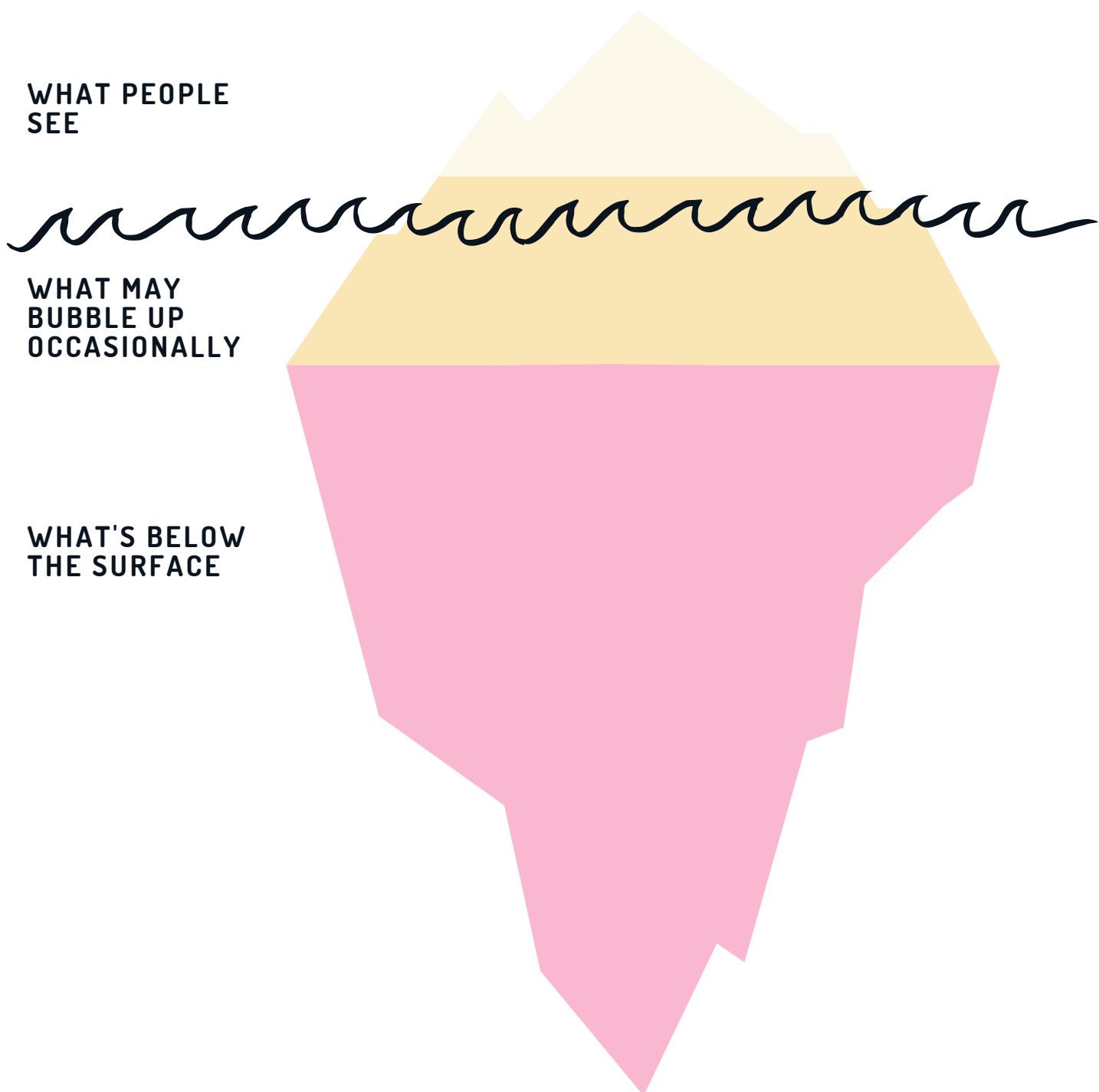
Often when we are angry, there are other emotions hidden under the surface. This is what we call the Anger Iceberg, because it shows other emotions and feelings that may be hidden below the surface. Sometimes it's embarrassment, loneliness, depression, or fear. Other times, it's a combination of several feelings.



## Your iceberg

Think about a topic you want to focus on.

Add the elements, emotions or thoughts that sit in the different areas.





## What have you learnt?

Has anything surprised you? Has anything disappointed you? Have you spotted any unknown strengths or positives? Write down what you learnt.



## What do you need to do or change?

Write down a few actions that you need to take, either individually or together.

# The five types of communication

This activity will help you to understand how people communicate so you can consider your own style.

Most people think that the primary communication is verbal. But there is so much more going on. Studies have proven that over 90% of communication is not actually what is said. This activity will help you understand the five types of communication and reflect on how these are present in your relationship.

## How to use this tool

1

Consider how the five different types of communication are present in yourself and in your partner.

2

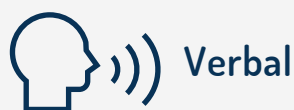
Share your responses with your partner - and ask them to share their responses with you.

3

Look at the areas where you have similarities and the areas where you have differences.

4

Use this knowledge to consider what actions you need to take - both individually and jointly.



## Verbal

Verbal communication occurs when we engage in speaking with others. It can be face-to-face, over the telephone, via Skype or Zoom, etc. Regardless of the type, it is not just about the words, it is also about the complexity and emotional attachment of those words, how we string those words together to create an overarching message, as well as the intonation (pitch, tone, emotion and volume) used while speaking.



## Listening

Listening is perhaps one of the most important types of communication because if we cannot listen to the person sitting across from us, we cannot effectively engage with them. Without listening, it is impossible to assess what is being said, the meaning behind the message along with what is not being said. It is important to remember to 'listen to learn' rather than to 'listen to reply'.



## Written

Whether it is a text, WhatsApp message, Facebook post or letter, when you communicate in writing it is important to think about how those words will come across to the person reading them. Will they seem hurtful, loving, thought-provoking or a trigger for an argument. Do you include emoji's, kisses or always finish with the same wording? If so, what happens in those times that you don't include them? Does that cause problems? These elements are as important as the words used.



## Non-verbal

What we do while we speak often says more than the actual words. Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, posture, eye contact, hand movements, and touch. For example, if you're engaged in a conversation with your partner about something that is frustrating you, it is important to pay attention to their nonverbal cues to see if they indicate that they are comfortable, in agreement or are feeling angry or emotional.

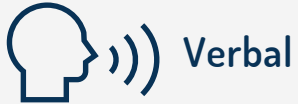


## Visual

We are a visual society - televisions are running 24/7, social media is full of memes, videos and images, and imagery to sell ideas. The images we post on social media are meant to convey meaning - to communicate a message. Are the images you are sharing agreed by you both? Does it cause problems in your relationship? It is important to set boundaries about what can be shared, how it can be shared and when. How you visually show your relationship to others is important. If there is an unspoken in balance in public displays of affection, this can cause difficulties and insecurities. It is important to talk these areas through together.

## Your communication

Use this space to think about how you communicate as an individual, how your partner communicates and how you communicate together.







## What have you learnt?

Has anything surprised you? Has anything disappointed you? Have you spotted any unknown strengths or positives? Write down what you learnt.



## What do you need to do or change?

Write down a few actions that you need to take, either individually or together.

# Moving forward

This activity will help you to bring together what you have learnt so far and consider how you move forward.

This stage can be quite difficult. It is focused on identifying what actions you need to take individually and together to move forward. Going through this guide may have brought you closer together as a couple. It may have also led to difficult conversations and a realisation that your relationship may not continue. By agreeing the actions together, you can identify what you each need to do to move forward in your lives.

## How to use this tool

- 1 Respond to the questions over the next few pages individually.
- 2 Share your responses with your partner - and ask them to share their responses with you.
- 3 Look at the areas where you have similarities and the areas where you have differences.
- 4 Use this knowledge to consider what actions you need to take - both individually and jointly.



## Rating review

After completing this toolkit, how would you score your relationship with your partner

On a scale of 0-10



## What you can do

What can you do to make your child feel more happy in your family?

What can you do to make you happier in yourself and in your family?

What can you do to make your partner feel more loved and respected?

## What your partner can do

What can your partner do to make your child feel more happy in your family?

What can your partner do to make you happier in yourself and in your family?

What can your partner do to make you feel more loved and respected?

What can your partner do to help you move forward?

What other questions would you like to ask your partner?

## What you can do together

What can you do as a partnership to make your child feel more happy in your family?

What can you do as a partnership to help you move forward?

What goals will you work towards together?

What key actions have you jointly identified to take:

## Step 3 - Change



**Change.**

### Use your learning

As you have journeyed through this guide, you will have learnt lots about yourself, your partner or ex-partner, your family and, most importantly, your child's thoughts.

Over the next few pages we have outlined three streams of help and support that we have on offer in the borough.

These build on:

1. the understanding you will have gained by answering the quizzes
2. the steps you will have taken using our Relationship Thought Prompts
3. the actions you will have identified when completing the activities



5

## Step 5 - Find the right support for you

Choose the right ideas for you, what you need and your lifestyle:



### Our parenting courses

We offer a range of free parenting courses across our six Children and Family Centres.



### Parenting seminars

We offer a range of free online parenting seminars and workshops.



### Directory of help and support

We have created a directory of services to help you find the advice you need for yourself.



## Our parenting courses

We offer a range of free parenting courses through our Bromley Children Project (part of the Early Intervention and Family Support Service).

These are provided face-to-face at our Children and Family Centres and online via video conferencing.

Our courses vary according to what help and support our parents need.

To view our latest courses:

get in touch with us

or

visit [www.bromley.gov.uk/parental-support/reducing-parental-conflict/2](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/parental-support/reducing-parental-conflict/2)

Call us on  
020 8461 7259

Or scan







The courses that we were offering when we produced this guide in September 2021 include:



### SHEEP

(Safeguarding and Health: An Effective Education for Parents)



### AVA – DVA group for children and mothers



### New Forest Parenting Programme



### Improving your family's self esteem



### Understanding anger in the family unit



### Strengthening families, strengthening communities



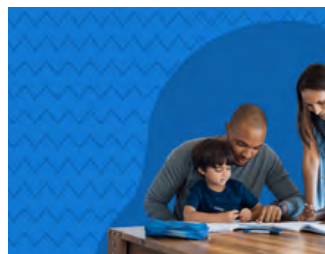
### Cygnets core programme



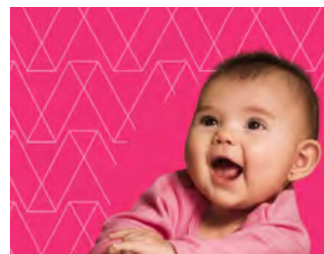
### Caring for your child



### Webster Stratton Incredible Year



### Positive Parenting Skills

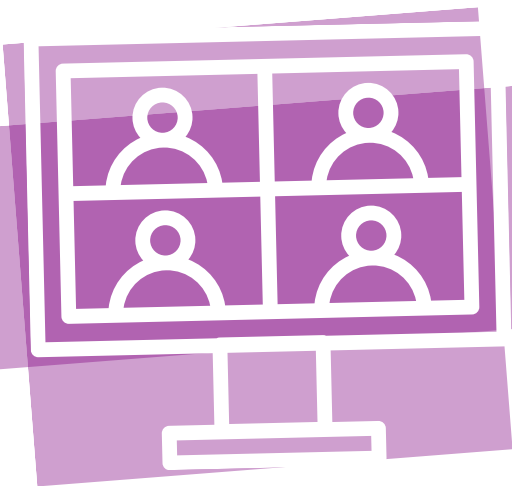


### Bambino



### The Nurturing Programme

Call us on  
020 8461 7259



## Parenting seminars

We offer a range of free parenting seminars and workshops through our Bromley Children Project (part of the Early Intervention and Family Support Service).

These are a series of one off sessions to develop and improve parenting capacity through standalone parenting topics.

These are provided online via video conferencing.

Our seminars vary according to what help and support our parents need.

To view our latest seminars:

get in touch with us

or

visit [www.bromley.gov.uk/parental-support/parenting-courses-online-seminars](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/parental-support/parenting-courses-online-seminars)

Call us on  
020 8461 7259

Or scan



The seminars that we were offering when we produced this guide in September 2021 include:



Relationships



What is Autistic Spectrum Condition?



New Forest Parenting Programme (virtual)



Autistic Spectrum Condition and meltdowns



Autistic Spectrum Condition and puberty



Boundaries



Communication



New at Parenting (NAP)



Strengthening families, strengthening communities (virtual)



Autistic Spectrum Condition and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)



Autistic Spectrum Condition and bedtimes



Autistic Spectrum Condition and anxiety

Call us on  
020 8461 7259



## Directory of help

We have a range of different services available across Bromley for our children and for our families. Some of these are directly provided by the Council with a significant number provided by our partners.

View this directory online

visit  
[www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub/children-families-support-services](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub/children-families-support-services)

Or scan



### Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid

Empowering anyone suffering domestic abuse so they can make informed choices about their future and to help them gain the confidence, strength and self-respect needed to free themselves from abusive relationships.



020 8313 9303



[bcwa.org.uk](http://bcwa.org.uk)

### Bromley Brighter Beginnings

Distribution of prams, clothes, highchairs, nappies and toiletries to families in need living.



[bromleybrighterbeginnings.org.uk](http://bromleybrighterbeginnings.org.uk)

## Bromley Council

### Adult Social Care



020 8461 7777



[adult.early.intervention@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:adult.early.intervention@bromley.gov.uk)

### Children's Social Care



020 8461 7373  
020 8461 7379  
020 8461 7026



[candfhub@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:candfhub@bromley.gov.uk)

Out of hours (after 5pm weekdays, all day on weekends and bank holidays)



0300 303 8671

## Bromley Drug and Alcohol Services

Helping people change the direction of their lives, grow as individuals, and live life to its full potential by tackling any drug or alcohol related behaviours.



020 8289 1999



[changegrowlive.org](http://changegrowlive.org)

## Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich Mind

Help for anyone struggling with their mental health, or supporting someone who is.



01689 811222



[blgmind.org.uk](http://blgmind.org.uk)

## Bromley Therapy Hub

A collective of therapy advice, support and services for children, teenagers and young adults in Bromley.



[bromleytherapyhub.org.uk](http://bromleytherapyhub.org.uk)

## Bromley Well

Support for young carers aged 4 to 19 to help the children manage caring relationships whilst enjoying their childhood.



0808 278 7898



[bromleywell.org.uk](http://bromleywell.org.uk)

## Bromley Y

Emotional wellbeing and mental health support for children and families by enabling change, fostering resilience and helping them build healthy relationships.



020 3770 8848



[bromley-y.org](http://bromley-y.org)

## Clarion Housing Group

The UK's largest housing association, owning and managing a significant number of homes across the borough.



0300 500 8000



[myclarionhousing.com](http://myclarionhousing.com)

## Home-Start Bromley

Help for families with at least one child under five years of age through a team of trained volunteers who provide practical and non-judgmental support for families.



020 3665 9860



[home-startbromley.org.uk](http://home-startbromley.org.uk)

## Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS)

Free, impartial, confidential information, advice and support about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for children and young people up to age 25, and their parents and carers.



020 8461 7630



[bromley.gov.uk/IASS](http://bromley.gov.uk/IASS)

## Relate (Bromley)

Confidential counselling for couples and individuals with relationship problems or difficulties



0300 003 3225



[relate.org.uk](http://relate.org.uk)

## Sexual Health Bromley

A free, non-judgmental contraception and reproductive health service for men and women of all ages (including under 16).



0300 330 5777



[sexualhealthbromley.co.uk](http://sexualhealthbromley.co.uk)

## Talk Together Bromley

A free NHS evidence-based talking therapy service for people aged 18 years and over, who are anxious, stressed, have low mood or suffer from depression.



0300 003 3000



[talktogetherbromley.co.uk](http://talktogetherbromley.co.uk)

# Get in touch

## 1 You can get in touch with the Bromley Children Project



Call us on

020 8461 7259



Email us on

[bcpadmin@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:bcpadmin@bromley.gov.uk)

or reach out on social media



The Bromley Children Project



[thebromleychildrenproject](https://www.instagram.com/thebromleychildrenproject)



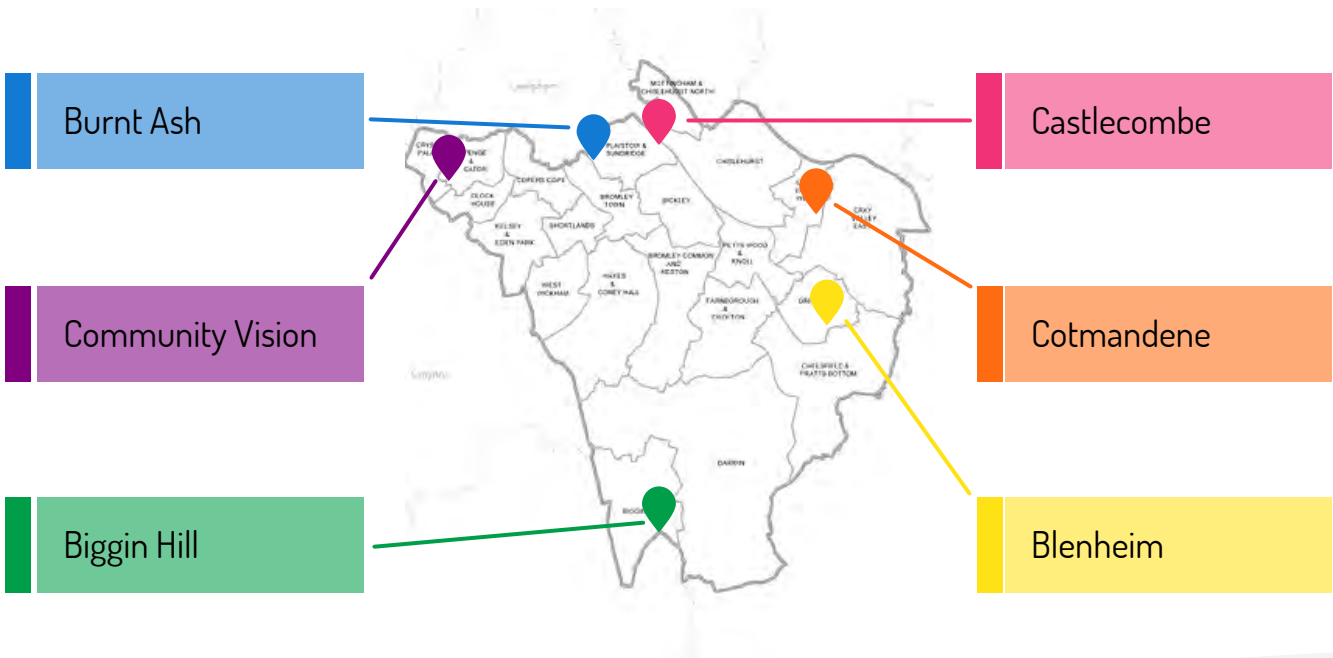
Visit us online

[www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub)



# 2

## You can visit our six Children and Family Centres



### Biggin Hill

Sunningvale Avenue  
TN16 3TN  
  
01959 571 694  
bigginhillcfc@bromley.gov.uk

### Blenheim

Blenheim Road  
BR6 9BH  
  
01689 831 193  
blenheimcfc@bromley.gov.uk

### Burnt Ash

Rangefield Road  
BR1 4QX  
  
020 8697 4503  
burntashcfc@bromley.gov.uk

### Castlecombe

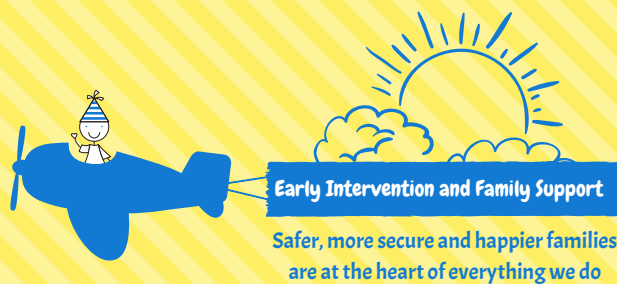
Castlecombe Road  
SE9 4AT  
  
020 8857 1185  
castlecombecfc@bromley.gov.uk

### Community Vision

Woodbine Grove  
SE20 8UX  
  
020 8778 2970  
communityvisioncfc@bromley.gov.uk

### Cotmandene

Cotmandene Crescent  
BR5 2RB  
  
020 8300 2548  
cotmandenecfc@bromley.gov.uk



[www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/bromley-parenting-hub)

Or scan



THE LONDON BOROUGH  
[www.bromley.gov.uk](http://www.bromley.gov.uk)

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