

Acknowledging Defensive Patterns

It can be helpful to recognize the emotions and feelings experienced when we act defensively in relationships and fall into negative emotional cycles of behavior.

List ways in which you act defensively with your partner (for example, making excuses, withdrawing, becoming angry, arguing, looking away):

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Reflecting on each one, and all of them together, capture how you are feeling. Examples may include:

I just want to be out of here

I'm failing

I'm falling

I'm overwhelmed

I'm exhausted

I have disappointed you

List as many of the above, or additional ones, that hold true for you:

Having reflected on each one, sit down with your partner and share how you feel.

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