

Before the talk

A one-page worksheet for a hard conversation with your partner

Before you start

Do you ever feel afraid of your partner, or pressured or controlled by them?

If yes, or if you're not sure, set this page aside.

National Domestic Violence Hotline — Call 800.799.SAFE (7233) · Text START to 88788 · Chat at thehotline.org

love is respect — Call 1-866-331-9474 · Text LOVEIS to 22522 · Chat at loveisrespect.org

If your partner checks your phone or computer, use one they can't check.

In immediate danger, call 911. In a mental health crisis, call or text 988.

fold or cut here

For you, before you decide to have the talk

1 · The one thing this talk is about

One subject, in one sentence. If there are three, pick this week's.

2 · What happened, or what has changed

The facts only, the way a phone camera would have caught them.

3 · What it is like for me

Feeling words, about me and not about them: hurt, worried, embarrassed, guilty.

4 · What I don't know yet

What I'm guessing about their side, and one question I could ask.

Before part two: if box 3 says you're scared of your partner, stop, and go back to the top of this page.

The talk

5 · If they remember one thing, it is this

One sentence, with no "always" and no "never."

6 · What I'm asking for

One request they could say yes or no to: something to do, not something to be.

7 · When and where

When neither of us is rushed or about to leave; where we can both speak freely.

8 · My first sentence

Word for word, the way I'd say it out loud.

9 · If it gets heated

My line for a pause, and the time I'd offer to pick it back up.

10 · Enough for one talk

What would make this talk worth having, even if nothing gets settled.

Afterward

11 · What we agreed, and when we'll check in

One line each. For the check-in, a day — not "soon."