



News you can use...from your EAP

Relationship conflict: For women silence is not golden

Married women who keep silent during marital disputes have a greater chance of dying from heart disease and other conditions than women who speak their minds, according to a study recently published in the journal *Psychosomatic Medicine*. The research, which spanned from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, was the latest to show that how couples fight affects not only their relationship but also their health. “For women,” the study summarizes, “the message is clear. When in conflict with your spouse, it helps to express yourself.”

How to “fight fair” and be heard

If you want to learn how to better express yourself during conflicts with your partner, you and your partner may need to learn how to “fight fair.” Fighting fair means following guidelines that promote a safe and fair discussion or argument where both partners allow each other to express feelings and positions fully. The guidelines below can help:

1. Be specific when you introduce a complaint. Confine yourself to one issue at a time.
2. Don’t just complain. Ask for or suggest a reasonable change to help resolve the problem.
3. Do not let counter-demands enter the picture until the original request is clearly understood and there has been a clear-cut response.
4. Do not be sarcastic or intolerant. Be open to your own feelings and equally open to your partner’s.
5. Be open to compromise. Your partner’s view of reality may be just as real as yours, even though you may differ. Relationships are often a series of compromises.
6. Never make labeling statements, accusations or put-downs. Name calling, snide remarks, put-downs or negative facial expressions are not unacceptable in a fair fight. They can be unproductive and damaging to your relationship.
7. Don’t interrupt. Let the other person finish before you speak.
8. No physical violence is ever allowed. This is a firm guideline for fair fighting. Time out is okay. If things get too heated, ask to continue the discussion at another time. Specify the time.

Your EAP is here to help

If you want to obtain no cost counseling for marital, relationship or communication problems, or for information about other EAP services, please call **800-869-0276** or securely request services from the Member Access section of the EAP website: www.eapconsultants.com