



Sending Positive Messages



Content on this side is intended for the educator's reference. The information on the back can be photocopied and shared with clients.

Objective: Clients will identify some ways they can communicate positively with their partner and ensure messages are understood.

Audience: This tool would be useful for clients who struggle having calm and positive conversations with their partners.

Estimated Time: 15-20 minutes

Educator Instructions: Review the instructions printed on the tool. This tool can be completed individually or with couples. When working with couples, make two (2) copies of the tool so both partners can fill in their answers. When clients are dealing with a lot of negative emotions, this tool can be paired with many of the activities in the *Manage* module.

Begin by talking about some ways partners can send positive messages to each other. Encourage clients to come up with their own examples. Next, have them think of a positive conversation they recently had with their partner. What were some positive things that were said? (Note: if clients focus on negative things, redirect them to identify some positive parts of the conversation). Have them think about how well messages were taken as intended and come up with some ways they could communicate thoughts and feelings more clearly in the future.

Discussion Starter: Being able to communicate clearly and positively is important for couple relationships. Positive comments help build trust, commitment, and let your partner know that he or she is loved and respected. Sometimes it is difficult to express our feelings clearly, especially when we feel rushed or when we are under a lot of stress. And sometimes partners take positive comments the wrong way. I have an activity that can help you send positive messages and also be sure your partner “gets” what you are saying.

Follow-up: During your next visit, talk to clients about whether they have made progress at sending positive messages. If no progress has been made, talk to clients about the things in their life that may be preventing them from communicating positively. It is important to have the clients focus on the things that they can change as opposed to things that they cannot change to improve their positive communication.





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Couples who have positive interactions experience more closeness, trust, and are better prepared to get through tough times. One key to positive interaction is being able to communicate clearly.

- **Send clear messages:** Be sure what you say matches what you do.
- **Know your partner's moods and cues:** Your partner is more likely to take a joke the right way when he or she is in a good mood.
- **Share helpful messages:** Be supportive. Sometimes when your partner has had a bad day, he or she just needs you to listen. Don't interrupt or offer advice unless you're asked.

Here are some examples of specific things you can say to send positive messages to your partner:

- Offer compliments and be sure your partner knows you are being sincere: "You look nice." or "This dinner is delicious."
- Provide reassurances: "I'm in this with you. We will get through it together." or "I'm committed to this relationship for the long haul."
- Express affection: "I love you" or "You make me happy."
- Show interest by asking questions and listening: "How was your day?"
- Admit when you're wrong and know how to be right: "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hurt you. Can we work on this?" or "I clearly made a mistake. What can I do to help us move forward?"

Think about conversations you have had with your partner during the past week and answer the following questions:

What are some positive things your partner has said to you? How did this make you feel?

What were some positive things you have said to your partner? How did this make your partner feel?

When you said positive things to each other, how did that make you feel about your relationship?

Did you say anything that your partner took the wrong way? What can you say or do differently to help your partner know what you mean?

Nurture your relationship by sharing sincere, positive messages.