**10 Tips for Healthy Communication**

1. **Discuss one topic at a time**, without bringing in other issues.
2. **Communicate rather than criticize**. Begin conversations with “I feel hurt when... I worry that... I’m confused about...” rather than saying, “You are always late... You never call... You don’t care...”.
3. **Make requests, not demands or accusations**. Be specific, i.e. “I would like us to...”.
4. **Do not interrupt while your partner is speaking**. Really listen for which feelings your partner is expressing then tell your partner what you’ve heard him/her say and ask if this is what he/she has meant to say.
5. **Pause to question your own thoughts and responses** before automatically reacting and charging in with a response.
6. **Think before you speak**. What you say can evoke either a positive or negative response, depending on how it is said. Consider where you really want this discussion to go.
7. **Discuss your feelings openly and as they arise**. Make it a regular habit to discuss your feelings calmly with your partner to prevent issues from piling up.
8. **Know when to back off, walk away, and cool off**. There are times when it is best to walk away from the conversation and come back to it when you are both feeling calmer. This should not be used as a way of keeping your partner hanging, using the silent treatment, or playing other head games, however.
9. **Use humour when appropriate** but be careful not to brush off or make fun of your partner’s feelings.
10. **Always remain respectful and courteous** of your partner, even during heated discussions. There is never an excuse to call someone names or intentionally hurt their feelings or intimidate them.