

RULES FOR FAIR FIGHTING

RULE #1: NO DEGRADING LANGUAGE

Avoid name-calling, insults, put-down or swearing.

RULE #2: NO BLAMING

It's pointless to blame each other. Blaming your spouse distracts you from solving the problem at hand. It invites the other to be defensive and it escalates the argument.

RULE #3: NO YELLING

If it feels like yelling to the other person, it probably is. Make a conscious effort to lower your voice and soften your attitude.

RULE #4: NO USE OF COERSION

This includes pushing, shoving, grabbing, hitting, punching, slapping, restraining, damaging property and throwing things. Each of us has a right to be safe and free of abuse.

RULE #5: DEFINE YOURSELF, NOT THE OTHER PERSON

Use words that describe how YOU feel, what YOU want and what is important to YOU – not how you think the other person feels, wants or is important to them.

RULE #7: STAY IN THE PRESENT

Keep your focus on what can be done today to resolve the issue at and go forward.

RULE #8: TAKE TURNS SPEAKING

Let one person speak at a time. When one speaks the other should be listening, really listening, not just planning their rebuttal. Take turns speaking and listening until you both have said what you need to say.

RULE #9: WHEN NECESSARY, USE TIME-OUTS

Remember: no amount of talking will lead to problem-solving if you are not in the frame of mind to want a solution. It's ok to call a time-out.