

How can we communicate better?

Part of being in a healthy relationship is having good communication.

Below are some tips to help you and your partner communicate well.

For good communication:

- **Find the right time.** Find a good time to talk about things that are bothering you. Don't try to bring up a serious issue while your partner is doing something else or if they are stressed. Tell your partner you want to talk and plan a good time.
- **Talk face to face.** Talk about serious issues in person, not in text messages or emails.
- **Do not attack.** Even when we mean well, some words can come across as harsh. If your partner feels like you are attacking them, they may not hear your message. And they may be defensive. Start your sentences with "I" or "we", instead of "you". So, you may say, "*I* feel like *we* haven't been as close lately" instead of "*You* have been distant lately."
- **Be honest.** Nobody is perfect! Say you are sorry when you make a mistake. Try not to make excuses. You will feel better and it will help make your relationship stronger.
- **Check your body language.** Make eye contact when you're talking. Put away your cell phone or other things that might distract you. Focus on talking to your partner.
- **Give yourself time to cool off.** If you get really mad about something, stop, take a step back, and breathe. Give yourself time to calm down. Talk to a friend. Take a walk. Listen to music. Do whatever helps you relax. Taking a break can keep things from getting worse.



If you are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, be careful using these tips. If you think any of these tips may put you in danger, don't try them.

Talk to a CHN social worker if you are in an unhealthy relationship.

Good communication is not always easy. At first, it may feel funny to use some of these tips. But these tips will help you to communicate better and build a healthy relationship.



How can we talk about STIs?

Talking about STIs (infections you can get from sex) with your partner is important. It helps you and your partner stay healthy.

Talking shows you care.

Talking about STIs shows that you want to make sure you and your partner are both safe and healthy. Getting tested doesn't mean anyone has cheated or that you don't trust each other. It means you respect and care about your partner.

To talk about getting tested, say something like: "I'm kind of nervous to put this out there... but I think it's important that we go get tested together. Getting tested before we have sex will protect both of us. Why take a chance when we can know for sure?"

To tell your partner that you have an STI, say something like: "I really feel I can trust you, and I'd like to tell you something very personal. I found out that I have an STI. A lot of people don't talk about it, but it's actually really common. Most people who have an STI don't even realize it. I'm telling you now so that we can take steps to have safer sex."

What if I need help telling my partner?

If you don't feel comfortable or safe talking to your partner, but you want to tell them about the STD anonymously, there are resources to help.



Visit tellyourpartner.org. This website allows you to anonymously text your partners to tell them that they were exposed to an STD or HIV.



Visit [STDcheck.com/anonymous-notification.php](https://stdcheck.com/anonymous-notification.php). This website allows you to anonymously contact your partners by text or email.



Talk to your **health educator, provider, or social worker** at CHN.

**Getting tested for STDs is just part of staying healthy.
Nervousness is normal, so speak up!**