

# **Practical Communication Skills for Veteran Relationships**

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## **Practical Application for Intimate Relationship Skills**

- \*PAIRS is an educational curriculum designed to be a relationship intervention program that teaches communication skills designed to increase emotional openness and physical closeness.**
- \*PAIRS programs teach the affective, behavioral, and cognitive skills needed to establish healthy intimate partnerships while at the same time recognizing and validating our individual differences.**

# INTERDISCIPLINARY EFFORT

Twenty-three professionals from Primary Care, Chaplain Service, Seamless Transition, Research, Polytrauma, Voluntary Service, SATS, Psychiatry, Education, and Social Work comprise a team dedicated to helping improve our veterans' relationship skills.



# PAIRS

## MISSION AND VISION

The mission of PAIRS is to teach those attitudes, emotional understandings and behaviors that nurture and sustain healthy relationships and to make this knowledge broadly available on behalf of a safer, saner, more loving world.

# MODULE ONE

## THE HEART OF INTIMACY

Relationship Road Map

Stress Styles of Communication

Daily Temperature Reading

Talking Tips

Love Bank

# MODULE TWO

## CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

Emotional Stages of Development

The Emotional Jug and Dirty Fighting

Emptying the Emotional Jug

Fair Fight for Change

# MODULE THREE

## EMOTIONAL LITERACY

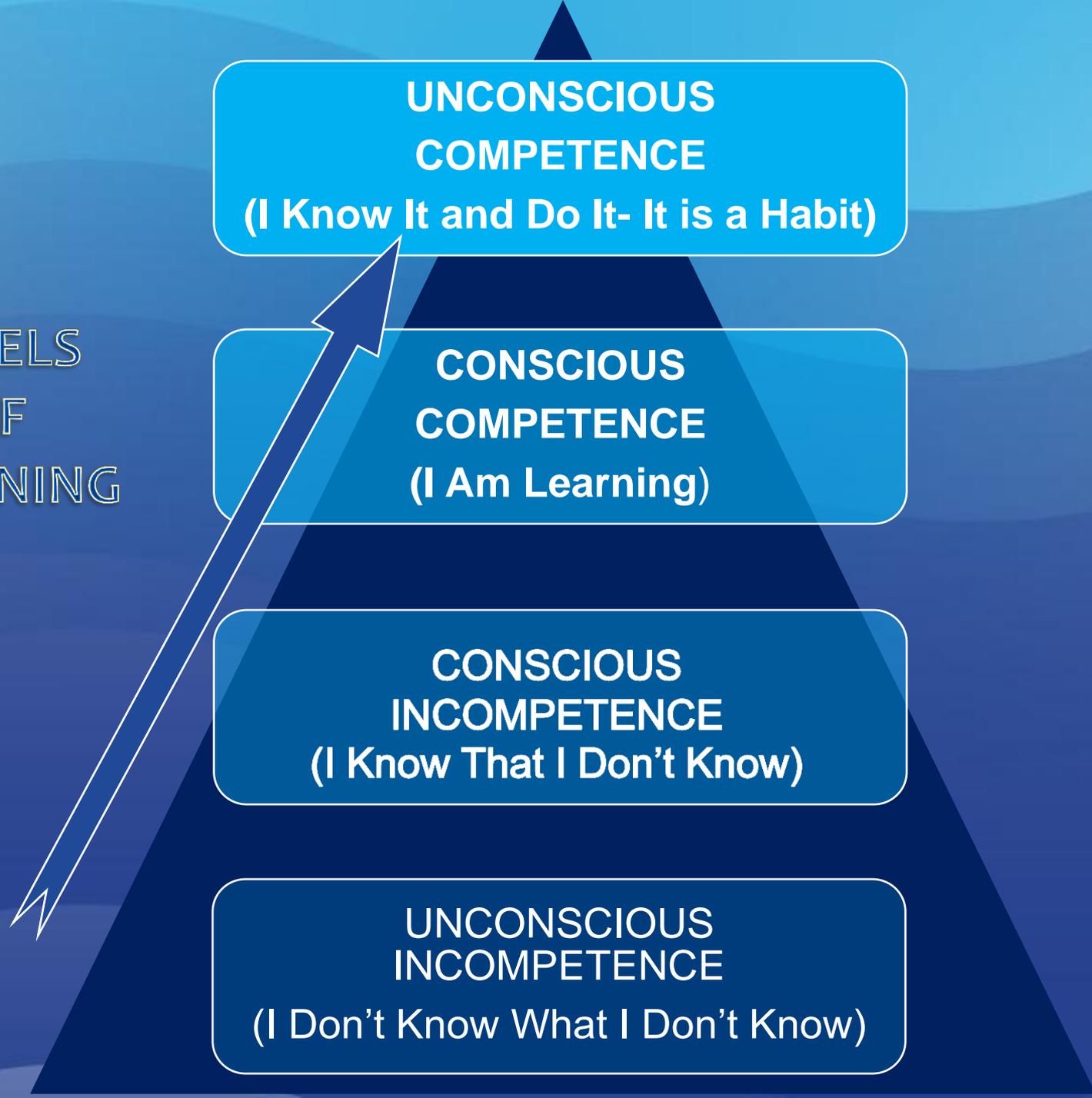
Love Knots

Powergram

Emotional Allergies

Transforming to LOVE

LEVELS  
OF  
LEARNING



**UNCONSCIOUS  
COMPETENCE**  
(I Know It and Do It- It is a Habit)

**CONSCIOUS  
COMPETENCE**  
(I Am Learning)

**CONSCIOUS  
INCOMPETENCE**  
(I Know That I Don't Know)

**UNCONSCIOUS  
INCOMPETENCE**  
(I Don't Know What I Don't Know)

# Relationship Road Map I

## The Logic of Emotion and Bonding

**DIS-EASE**  
**DISTRESS**  
**DISTRUST**  
**UNHAPPINESS**  
**PAIN**  
**DANGER**  
**FEAR/ANGER**

**BIOLOGICALLY  
BASED NEEDS**  
Air – Food – Water – Shelter

**EASE**  
**EU-STRESS**  
**TRUST**  
**HAPPINESS**  
**PLEASURE**  
**DESIRE**  
**LOVE**

### **BONDING**

(Emotional Openness/Physical Closeness)

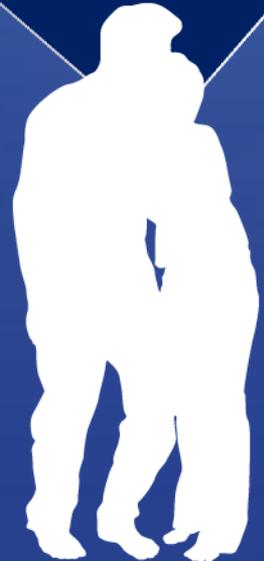


#### **SYMPTOMS OF UNHAPPINESS**

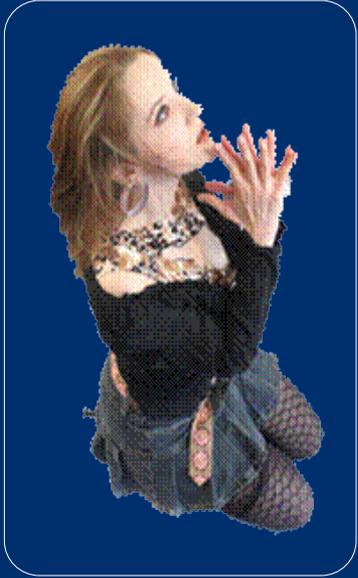
Illness, Fatigue  
Depression  
Rigidity of Personality  
Constriction, Isolation  
Closed, Guarded, Wary  
Anti-Social Behavior  
Range of Addictions:  
Drugs, Alcohol  
Food, Shopping, Work  
Gambling, Internet

#### **SIGNS OF HAPPINESS**

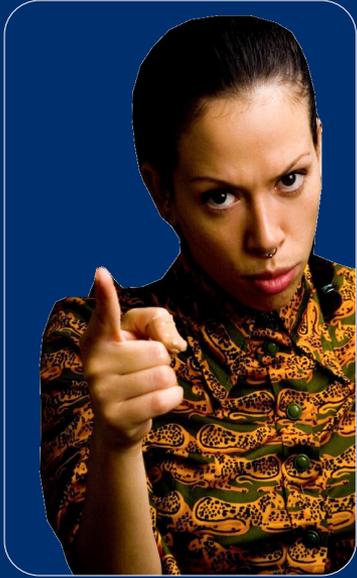
Health, Energy  
Well Being  
Flexibility  
Creativity  
Open, Sharing  
Personal  
Responsibility  
Capacity for Intimacy



# STRESS STYLES OF COMMUNICATION



The Placater  
or “People  
Pleaser”



The  
Blamer



The  
Computer



The  
Distracter

# THE LEVELING OR “CONGRUENT” STYLE

“Together we  
can bring our  
resources to  
solving  
whatever  
problems or  
challenges we  
face...”



“I can speak  
on my own  
behalf...”

“I can have empathy and show concern for how it  
is for the other...”

# DAILY TEMPERATURE READING

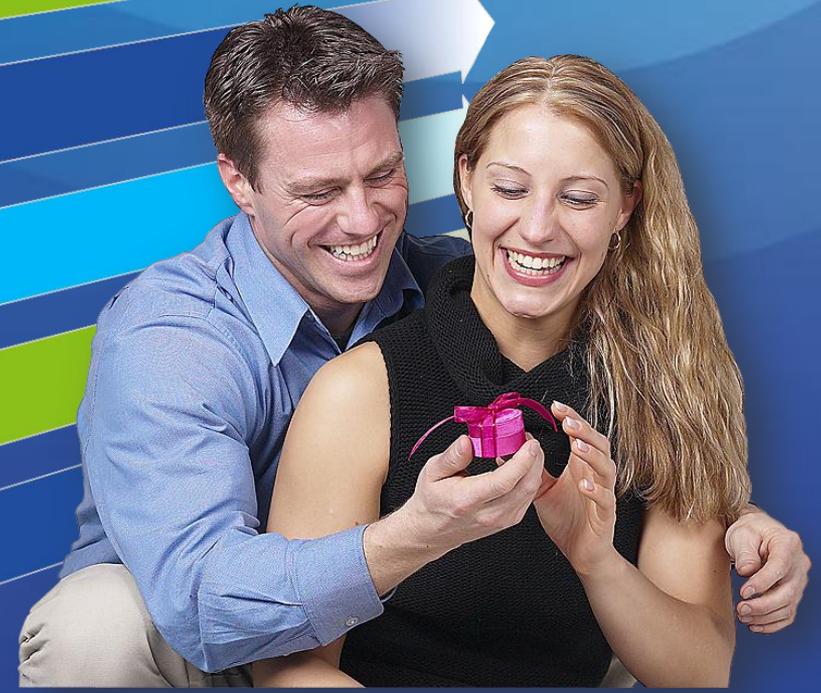
WITH APPRECIATION TO VIRGINIA SATIR

- Appreciations
- New Information
- Puzzles
- Concerns with  
Recommendations
- Wishes, Hopes,  
Dreams

# PAIRS TALKING TIPS



# MAKING DEPOSITS IN THE LOVE BANK



# EMOTIONAL STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT



## INFANT

“I want what I want when I want it!”



## CHILD

Doesn't say what's wrong... acts it out in behavior and keeps you guessing.



## ADOLESCENT

“Don't tell me what to do!”



## ADULT

Capacity for mutual concern and empathy. Desire for the relationship to win.



# THE EMOTIONAL ADULT

Has the capacity to demonstrate good will, is open to learning, growing, and has a willingness to change.

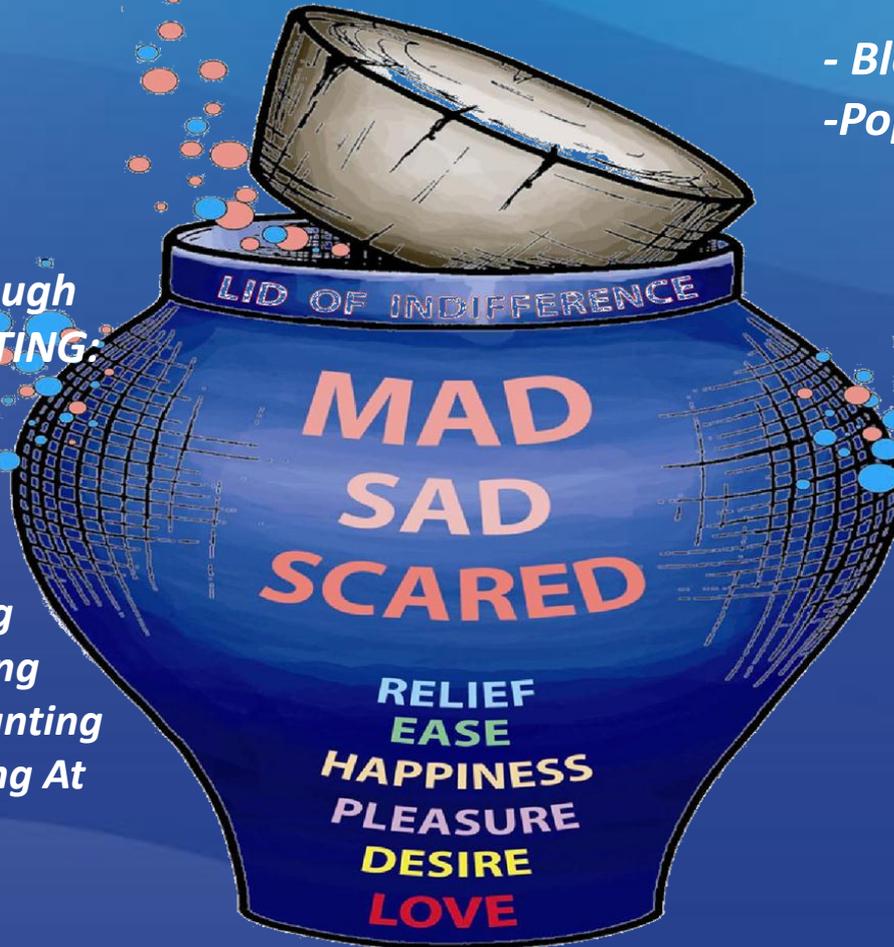
The healthy emotional adult will say:  
*“I can ask for what I need and want, without controlling, manipulating or running from you; I can listen with empathy for how it is for you without assuming it’s always about me.”*

# THE EMOTIONAL JUG

- *Blowing your Top*  
- *Popping Your Cork*

*Leaks Through  
DIRTY FIGHTING:*

*Sarcasm  
Ridiculing  
Threatening  
Accusing  
Labeling  
Taunting  
Laughing At*



*Leaks Through  
DIRTY FIGHTING:*

*Assuming  
Sneering  
Contempt  
Ignoring  
Blaming  
Stonewalling*

# EMPTYING THE EMOTIONAL JUG

What are you  
**MAD** about?

What else are you mad about?

- *If you were mad about anything else, what would it be? Thank You!*

What are you  
**SAD** about?

What else are you sad about?

- *If you were sad about anything else, what would it be? Thank You!*

What are you  
**SCARED**  
about?

What else are you scared about?

- *If you were scared about anything else, what would it be? Thank You!*

What are you  
**GLAD** about?

What else are you glad about?

- *Is there anything else that you are glad about? Thank You!*

# DIRTY FIGHTING

What are some of the bad ways of fighting that only make things worse for everyone involved?



# FAIR FIGHT FOR CHANGE: 10 STEPS

1. Invite partner.

2. Reflect on complaint.

3. State Complaint clearly  
(one specific behavior).

4. Partner repeats what you  
said (listening to understand,  
speaks with empathy).

8. Show Appreciation  
(for being heard  
accurately).

7. Partner repeats  
what you said  
(speaks with  
empathy).

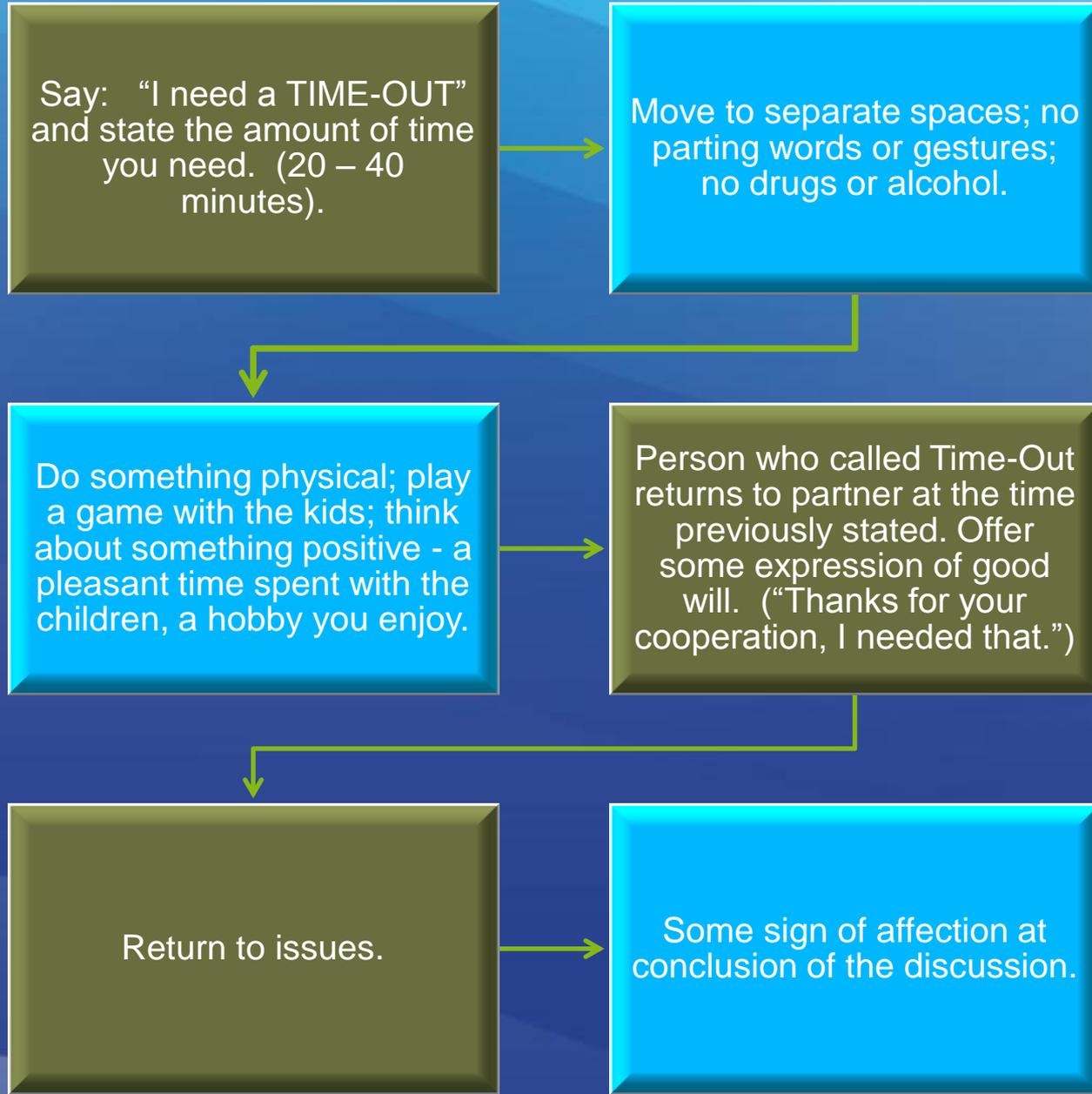
6. Ask for what you  
want specifically.  
*"Will you do it?"*

5. Show Appreciation  
(for being heard  
accurately).

9. Partner responds  
"Yes," "No," or "Yes  
with conditions."

10. Continue process  
until you come to a  
solution.

# TIME-OUT TIP



# LOVE KNOTS

Love Knots are commonly held beliefs that seem to be true. However, they are not true because they are not based on logical, realistic thinking. Love Knots can be very harmful to relationships.

# LOVE KNOT #1: You would know ...

## LOVE KNOT

If you really loved me, you would know what I want, and you would do it. Since you don't, you obviously don't care.



## UNTANGLED

I cannot assume that you know what I want and need. I will ask for what I want and not expect you to know.

# LOVE KNOT #5: I will need you ...

## LOVE KNOT

If I let myself get close to you, I will need you. If I am too dependent and need (love) you too much, I will not be able to survive without you. I will become weak.



## UNTANGLED

I can enjoy being close to you yet still survive on my own if I need to. As an adult, I am not helpless. I can make a new life for myself if I have to. Meanwhile, the pleasures of intimacy are among life's most fulfilling gifts.

# TALKING TIPS

## UNTANGLING LOVE KNOTS



I hope ...

I realize ...

What you can do to help me is...

What I can do for myself to untangle this knot is...

The price you have paid for my knot is...

The Love Knot I want to work on is...

My assumption has been...

I think I have this belief because ...

What I needed in my past was ...

The price I have paid in my life for having this knot is ...

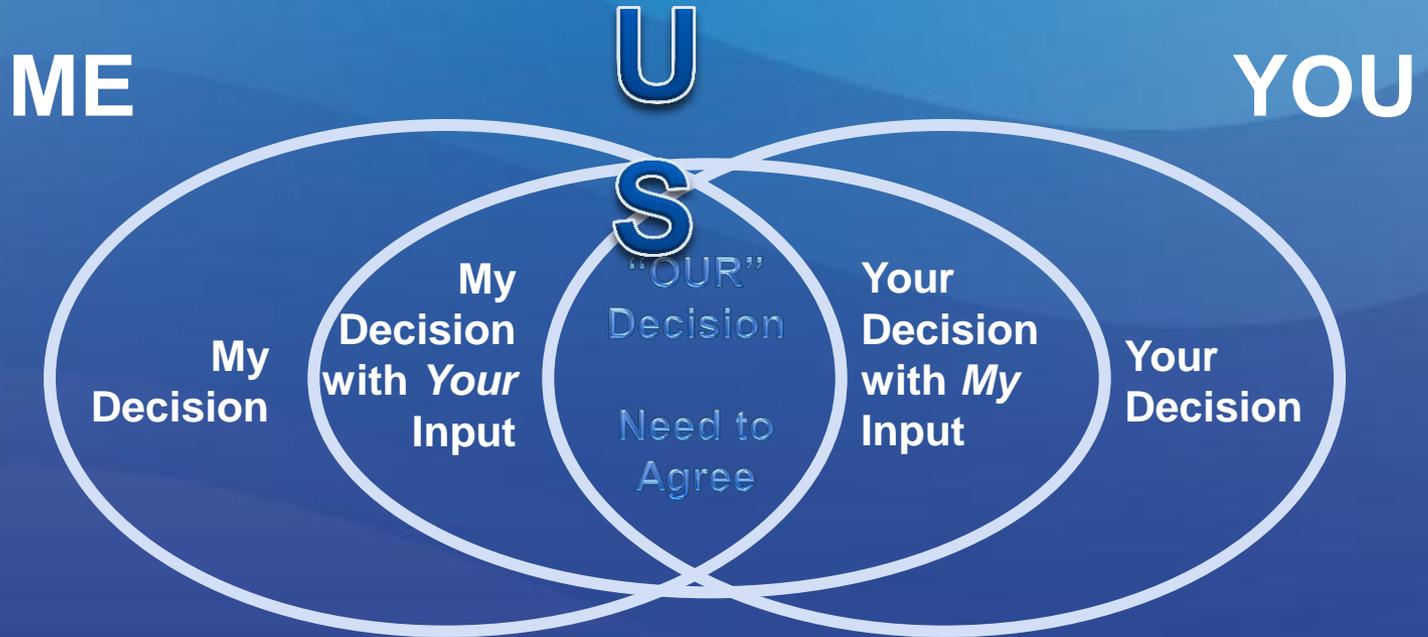
# WHO DECIDES DECISION MAKING

Let's Talk

Negotiable means...

Non-Negotiable means...

# PAIRS POWERGRAM



(Mine/Ours/Yours)  
Needs to be able to be discussed

# AN EXAMPLE OF AN EMOTIONAL ALLERGY

*Suppose that when you were a child every time there was a holiday, your father got drunk. Each holiday, you would hope that things would be different, but they never were. You remember starting out the day excited about the event, but each time your dad would come home drunk, you would feel angry, hurt, and disappointed.*

**Now today, it is a special holiday and your husband/wife is about to pour a drink and you go into a fit of rage...**

# EMOTIONAL ALLERGY LOOP

My Allergy:  
(TRIGGER)  
Raising your voice in anger.

My Feelings:  
Fear  
Hurt  
Anger

My Belief:  
Anyone who yells at me does not love me.

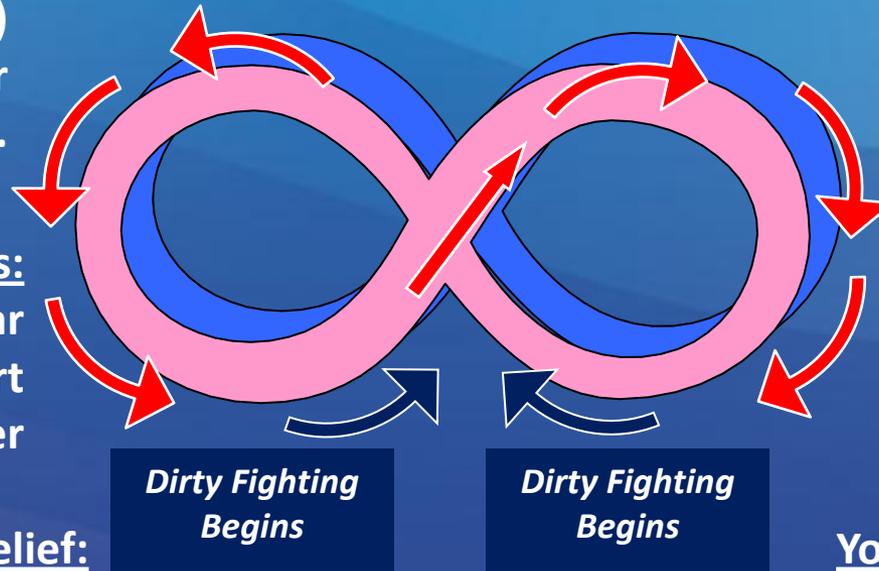
My Behavior:  
I give you the silent treatment for yelling.

Your Allergy  
(TRIGGER)  
Silent Treatment.

Your Feelings  
Hurt  
Anger  
Fear

Your Belief:  
Anyone who stops speaking to me, does not respect me, will leave me.

Your Behavior:  
I raise my voice again and you continue not to speak to me.



# TALKING TIPS

## EMOTIONAL ALLERGY LOOP



# TRANSFORMING THE ALLERGY LOOP INTO A LOOP OF LOVE

## Vulnerability:

Allowing another person to see the parts of you that are scared, hurt, sad, and lonely, etc.

Taking a risk to share your deepest thoughts and feelings with another person even when you are not sure how they will react.

## Empathy:

Imagining what it feels like to be in another person's shoes

Imagining what that person thinks and feels.

# PAIRS ESSENTIALS TOOL KIT



Problem or feeling	Tool Tip to use	To do for yourself	To do with your partner	Notes
Sense of growing distance	DAILY TEMPERATURE READING	Speak up for the relationship.	DTR will strengthen both partners' intimacy and develop the habit of confiding.	Set aside time daily. Give hugs and thanks!
Wanting more pleasure in your relationship	GOOD WILL UMBRELLA	Find empathy and compassion for your partner.	Listen, listen, and listen to understand.	Use this often!!
When using any of the tools	INVITATION RULE	Clarify which tool to use.	Invite your partner to participate.	Use this first!
Becoming emotionally upset	SHARED MEANING	Make notes to your self about your feelings.	Listen to, understand, and ask your partner "Is there more?"	Encourage full expression. Say, "Thank you for telling me!"
Suspicious of partner's motives and feelings	MIND READING (CHECK OUT PUZZLES)	Think about what you are assuming about partner.	Partner affirms or clarifies.	Listen to partner's feedback and clarification.
Attempting to resolve problems under stress	TIME OUT	Stop all talking immediately. State how much time you would like.	Do not continue to think badly of partner. Do not use drugs/alcohol.	Resume talking to discuss and resolve the problems.

# Training Opportunities

April 23-26, 2012 – Wooded Glen, Henryville, Indiana

Local Workshop based on interest

## Communication Workshops for Veterans



**VA**  
HEALTH  
CARE

Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century

# QUESTIONS