

Setting Limits on Conflict

In every couple's relationship, it is important to define the limits and boundaries of what is and what is not acceptable behavior is during a fight. Below, please define these limits for yourself in clear, specific terms. Also, define the limits you would like your partner to have. Be sure to cover such areas as physical behavior, voice tone, ending a fight and what you don't want said. On the back, list what you negotiate as agreeable to both of you.

1. For me, it is acceptable to do the following during a fight:

2. For me, it is not acceptable to do the following:

3. For you, it is acceptable during a fight to do the following:

4. For you, it is not acceptable to do the following:

Ineffective Behaviors Partners Use To Cope

Blame

Always be right

Defend

Name calling

Pout

Sulk

Withdraw

Drink too much

Deny

Intimidate

Keep secrets

Belittle

Dominate

Diagnose

Escape to work

Use the silent treatment

Be judgmental

Stonewall

Make fun of

Sarcasm

Get impatient

Attack

Comply

Lie

Get stubborn

Use contempt

Bring in the kids

Abuse drugs

Provoke guilt

Shame my partner

Tell what partner feels

Interrupt

Nag

Be condescending

Compete

Bring up old issues

Micromanage

Cry

Close mind

Reject

Change subject

Distract

Put down

Dismiss partner

Criticize

Manipulate

Yell to drown each other out

Talk about other's (family) relations

Leave, walk out without taking a time out

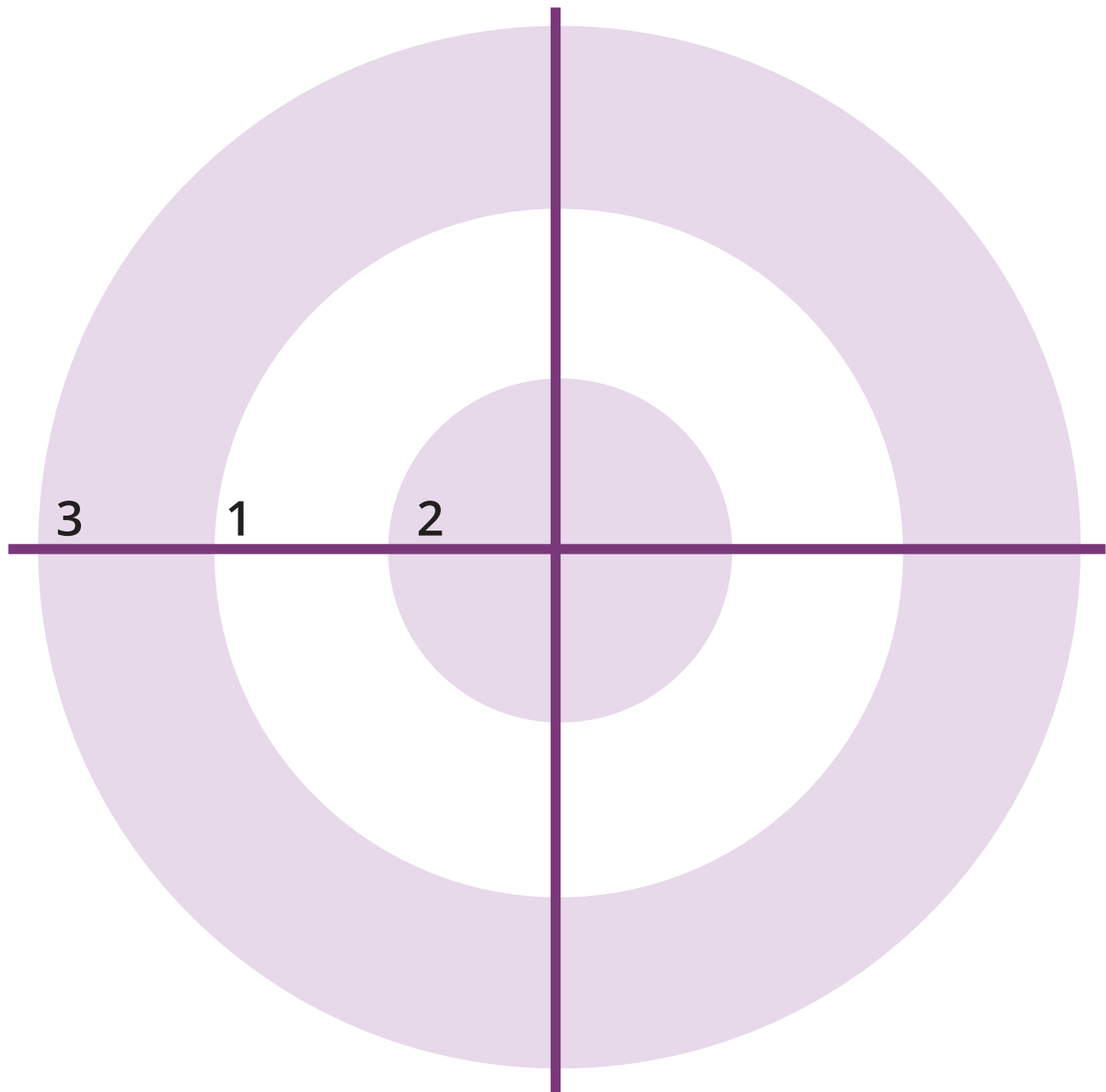


Five Categories of Ineffective Behaviors

All ineffective behaviors fall into one of the following categories:

1. Blame
2. Withdrawal
3. Resentful compliance
4. Confusion
5. Whine/Victim/Poor me

Uncovering Vulnerability and Shifting Negative Patterns



1. When I am at my worst in a distressing interaction with my partner, what I do is
2. The feeling that is the hardest to let my partner see when I am at my worst is
3. What I want to do instead of being my worst is