

- Each spouse is equally responsible for communicating who they are and what their wants, needs and feelings are.
- "I am responsible for my half of the dialogue."
- "When one person dominates, two people are responsible: the one who overfunctions and the one who allows or contributes to its happening." - Augsburg
- "I will use I statements."                      Timing
- "Re-think and re-phrase."                      Soft start up
- "A word picture is worth a thousand words."                      Be specific
- "Beware: Red flag word ahead."                      Ask for what you want
- "It's not what we say but how we say it."                      Scaling

### **SUGGESTED EXERCISE FOR COUPLES:**

Set aside a specific time daily and practice good communication skills. Create a relaxing atmosphere: with pleasant surroundings, perhaps coffee/tea. Begin with a non-controversial subject. For example, "How was your day?" Gradually progress to more difficult areas. Concentrate on hearing and being heard at these times, rather than on solutions.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

#### **SELF:**

Do I take full responsibility for my half of the dialogue? Can I ask for what I want? Do I communicate my thoughts, feelings, desires? Or, am I a lazy or sloppy communicator? Do I expect my partner to be a mind-reader? Do I talk to others about my spouse instead of talking to him/her? Do I "clam up" as soon as communication gets uncomfortable? Am I willing to take the time and effort necessary to be clear and tactful?

#### **IN RELATION TO MY SPOUSE:**

Do I allow/encourage my spouse to communicate? Or, am I always unavailable, over-functioning, or cutting off communication by attacking or withdrawing as soon as I don't like what I hear? Do I try to be sensitive to my spouse's feelings and respect his/her point of view?

#### **MY GOAL IS:**