

# Fair Fighting Rules

Make no threats during an argument.

No name-calling.

Make no or labeling judgments such as, "You are so stupid", or "You never think about anyone else"

Don't assume you know how the other is feeling or thinking, or what they will say.

Limit fights/conflict to 10-15 minutes unless you are making progress. Plan a time to readdress the issue within 24 hours.

Stay on topic!

Avoid arguing via text or email.

Do not blindside the other. If there is a difficult topic you want to discuss, let your partner know before launching into it.

Do not interrupt the "talker". Check to make sure you have heard the person correctly before responding. One way to do this is to repeat back to the other what you think you heard before responding.

Refrain from using absolutes such as: never and always.

Do not argue in the dark. Having difficult discussions is best in person, sitting across from one other, and looking at one another.

No one may walk away or leave the house during an argument without letting the other person know space/time is needed to calm down, *and* decide when to continue the discussion.

Each person must take responsibility for change.

No finger pointing. It makes the recipient feel lectured and belittled.

Each person takes responsibility for his/her feelings. Rather than saying, "You make me so angry!" instead say, "I *feel* so angry".

Avoid over dramatization, it is not helpful. It deflects from solution seeking.

Each person has a right to take time out to collect his/her thoughts and regain perspective and composure.

Know what you are fighting about. What is the real issue? Is it the presented one, or is there an underlying issue.

Approach the argument with the willingness to listen and hear what the other is trying to express.

Do not store up feeling and then emotionally dump accumulated resentments and hurts and once.

Avoid blaming and fighting “to win” or “be right”. Work to solve the issue.