

MENTAL
HEALTH
SERIES
SESSION 4



Communication withOUT Conflict



Presented by Chris Guzniczak, LPC
Flower Mound Counseling

TODAY'S DISCUSSION

- Introduction
- Good Communication vs Bad Communication
- 5 Secrets of Effective Communication (EAR)
 - Empathy
 - Assertiveness
 - Respect





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EXPERIENCE

Partner and counselor at **Flower Mound Counseling**
Individual, Couples, & Groups

CERTIFICATIONS

TEAM CBT Level 3

Gottman Institute Level 2

First Responder Counseling, Professional Coaching, & Christian
Caregiver training



Intimate Communication begins with...

A CHANGE OF HEART

Good Communication

- from a place of empathy –
wanting to progress a
relationship with mutual respect.



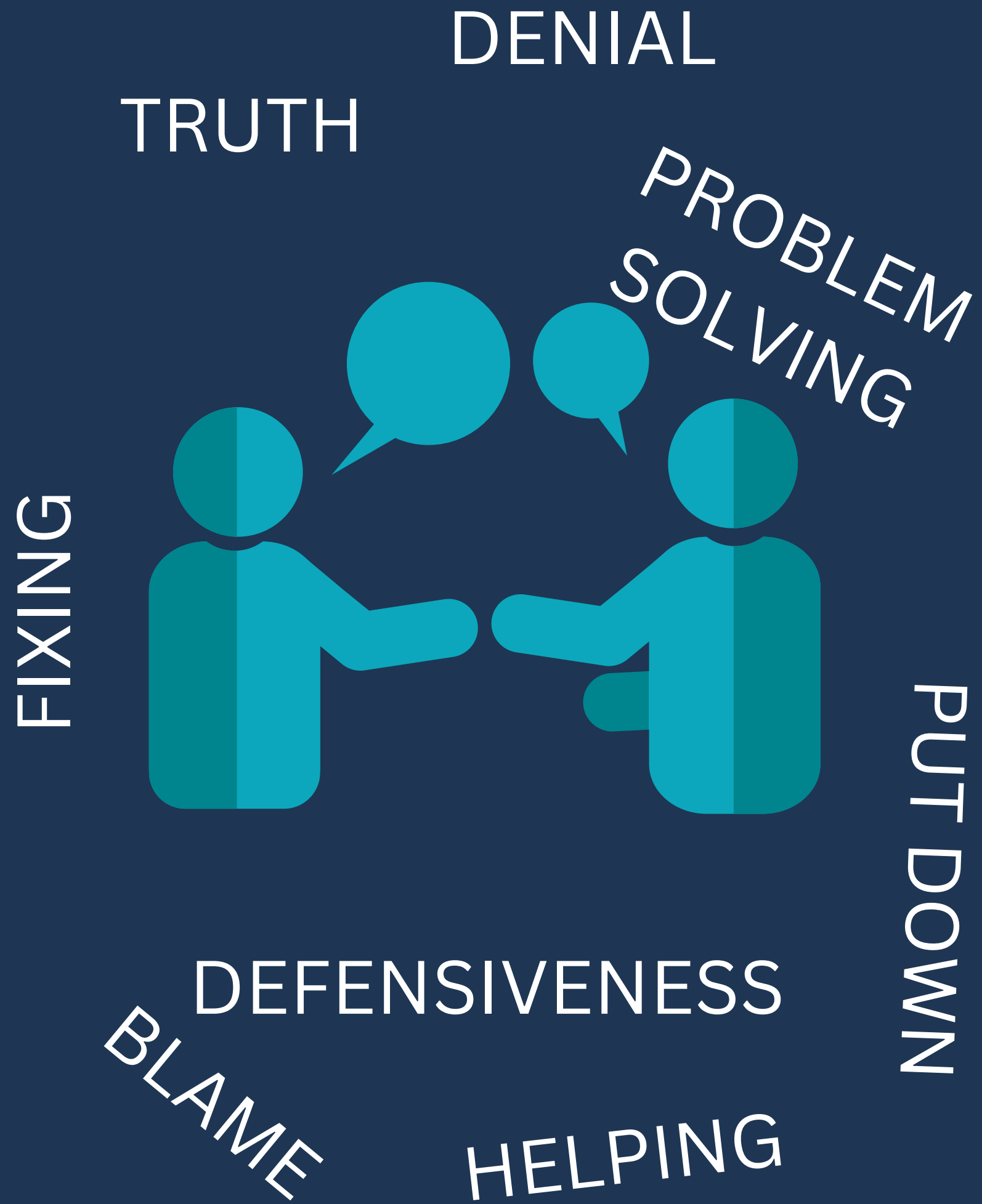
Good Communication

- from a place of empathy –
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Bad Communication

- from a place of pride and the
need to be right.



Good Communication

- from a place of empathy - wanting to progress a relationship with mutual respect.

Bad Communication

- from a place of pride and the need to be right.

5 SECRETS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- **EMPATHY**
 - **Disarming Techniques**
 - **Empathy (Thought & Feeling)**
 - **Inquiry**
- **ASSERTIVENESS**
 - **I “feel” statements**
- **RESPECT**
 - **Affirmation**

EMPATHY

Disarming Technique

- Acknowledge universal truth in what the other person says
- “you’re right...”
- *What we want to do:* defend ourself, convince other that we are right, give our advice



DISARMING TECHNIQUE

Your spouse says “You’re always late and I’m sick of waiting for you”



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Your boss says “This proposal stinks! What were you daydreaming when you wrote it?”



DISARMING TECHNIQUE

Your spouse says “You’re always late and I’m sick of waiting for you”

“It’s true, I am late and you have a right to be angry”

Your boss says “This proposal stinks! What were you daydreaming when you wrote it?”

“It sounds like I really missed the boat on this proposal. Could you tell me what you liked and disliked about it?”



EMPATHY

Thought Empathy

Repeat what the person said to confirm that you understand

“I’m hearing you say that…”

Feeling Empathy

Acknowledge what the other person is feeling to show that you understand

“I can imagine that you feel…”

“It seems like you feel…”

EMPATHY

Inquiry

Gently ask for more details and truthfully explore the other persons statement

Show genuine interest in what the other is saying

“Tell me more...” “How long has this...”

EMPATHY - DISARM, THOUGHT, FEELING, INQUIRY

Group Activity

- My boss hates me! Everything I do is wrong. She is on me about what I wear. She expects more from me than anyone else. Every time I finish a project I have to redo it!
 - **Disarm**
 - **Thought / Feeling Empathy**
 - **Inquiry**



EMPATHY - DISARM, THOUGHT, FEELING, INQUIRY

Group Activity

- My boss hates me! Everything I do is wrong. She is on me about what I wear. She expects more from me than anyone else. Every time I finish a project I have to redo it!

“Wow, it sounds like you and your boss don’t get along! She’s on you for what you wear. She has higher expectations of you than others, and she makes you redo your work. I can imagine how frustrating that is. It probably feels unfair and maybe even like she doesn’t respect you. I’m feeling frustrated with you right now! What else is she doing that is frustrating you?”

ASSERTIVE

I Feel Statements

- Shift focus to how you feel vs what the other person should or should not do, think, or feel
- Avoid “you statements” (you make me feel, you always, you should)
- State your feelings, don’t act them out (pouting, sarcasm, criticizing, silence, bad habits)
- Show imperfection – it fosters closeness

RESPECT

Affirmation

Even in the heat of battle, say something...

- KIND
- AFFECTIONATE
- RESPECTFUL
- ADMIRING

People want to feel cared for and appreciated

ASSERTIVENESS - I FEEL STATEMENTS

Group Activity

Your wife says “You’re always late and I’m sick of waiting for you”

“No one in this family cares about me anymore. You never call. You don’t check in to see if I’m OK. It’s like I don’t exist.”



ASSERTIVENESS - I FEEL STATEMENTS

Group Activity

Your wife says “You’re always late and I’m sick of waiting for you”

“It’s true, I am late and you have a right to be angry. You are here waiting for me after work every day and its not fair. It makes me frustrated and sad that we don’t spend more time together. Maybe we should talk more about this because i love you, and i care about how you feel..”

“No one in this family cares about me anymore.You never call. You don’t check in to see if I’m OK. It’s like I don’t exist.”

“You’re right, we don’t talk like we used to. It feels like you don’t exist if we never check in on you. That must feel very lonely. It breaks my heart to see you feel this way. How long have you felt this way? It’s so brave of you to bring this up!”

5 SECRETS OF INTIMATE COMMUNICATION

- **EMPATHY**
 - **Disarming Techniques**
 - **Empathy (Thought & Feeling)**
 - **Inquiry**
- **ASSERTIVENESS**
 - **I “feel” statements**
- **RESPECT**
 - **Affirmation**

Relationship Journal*

Step 1 – S/he said: Write down *exactly* what the other person said. Be brief:

Step 2 – I said: Write down *exactly* what you said next. Be brief:

Step 3 – Good Vs. Bad Communication: Was your response an example of good or bad communication? Why? Use the EAR Checklist or the Bad Communication Checklist to analyze what you wrote down in Step 2.

Step 4 – Consequences: Did your response in Step 2 make the problem better or worse? Why?

Step 5 – Revised Version: Revise what you wrote down in Step 2. Use the "Five Secrets of Effective Communication." If your revised response is still ineffective, try again.

relationship journal



David Burns MD, from “The Feeling Good Handbook,” copyright 1989

Chris Guzniczak, LPC, feedback from individual clients, 2018-2024

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RESOURCES

