

Self-Reflection Questions

Please give these questions some thought, write down your responses, and bring this with you to your next session.

1. TRIGGERS

What are your triggers? What alerts you to a sense of distance, disconnection, or lack of trust in your partner?

*(*Note: My focus as your therapist is not on assigning blame, but I do need to know what behaviors prompt your experience of fear, frustration, or disconnection. Likewise, with subsequent questions below, I'm encouraging you to think about your own sense of being triggered more than focusing on what your partner does).*

2. EMOTIONAL & FELT REACTION

- a. What **emotions** come up first for you when you feel triggered?

- b. What happens to you **physically** when you feel this distance, disconnect, or tension in your relationship? How do you feel in your body?

3. NEGATIVE INNER DIALOGUE

When we don't know how to come together to address pain, problems, or needs in our relationships, we often default to a negative inner dialogue/story that we tell ourselves. This story isn't just made-up; it comes from real and painful experience.

When you're feeling disconnected and triggered, **what do you tell yourself** about your partner, yourself, and your relationship?

- a. **What I think/tell myself about my partner:**

- b. **My inner dialogue about myself and my part in the problems:**

c. What I think/tell myself about our relationship:

4. WHAT YOU DO / HOW YOU COPE

When you're in this awful place of disconnection, **how do you cope? What do you do** when you're thinking these things about self/partner/relationship? If you feel like you have to defend/protect yourself, how do you do this? Do you pull away? Do you try to close the gap? Do you get blaming and critical? What emotion do you bring to your reactions?

5. LONGINGS & NEEDS

When you're caught in this negative place, it's common to lose touch with what you really need in order to feel connected with your partner. What do you long for in your relationship? How do you wish you felt with your partner? Do you share these longings and needs in a vulnerable, open way?

6. REFLECTION & ACCOUNTABILITY

Your answers to the previous questions can help you make sense of what you feel, what you think, and why you react in the ways you do when you're disconnected in your relationship. ***And, your feelings, thoughts, and reactions likely have an unintended negative impact on your partner and your relationship. Your reactions—whether they are defensive, withdrawing, attacking, critical, explaining, or justifying—likely trigger your partner into a further state of disconnection and distrust.***

How might your reactions, thoughts, and feelings contribute to the lack of emotional safety and connection? How do they perpetuate the problem?