

EXPRESSING WHAT YOU NEED

When overwhelmed it is hard to know what it is we need at that moment. This confusion and the desire to feel better can lead to unhelpful strategies. For example, if you have experienced a disappointment at work and you want to tell your partner about it but they are busy, you may still charge in and tell them in a louder voice to be sure they hear your distress. If the partner does not drop what they are doing to listen to you at that moment you may conclude that they don't care which adds to your distress. In this case your strategy has not achieved the desired outcome - to be listened to and comforted.

There is a technique to help us develop more effective strategies to get our needs met, but in the first instance we need to understand what our needs are. This can be very difficult so it is useful to start monitoring. The table below comprises three columns to help you to observe what is currently happening. This will enable reflection and development of new strategies.

Need	Strategy	Outcome
To explain how I am feeling to my partner	Ring him at work and just talk fast to get everything out of my head	He cuts the conversation short with an angry tone and hangs up
To explain how I am feeling to my partner	Write my feelings down at the time and pick a quiet moment to tell partner	Felt more in control of emotions & partner noticed

Next time

Remember - even after a poor outcome we can repair by trying a new strategy. **NEVER GIVE UP!**

Expressing needs monitoring diary

Need

Strategy

Outcome