

PARTNER CONVERSATIONS: ARE WE OR AREN'T WE?

Purpose: To have participants identify whether they are or aren't actively trying to prevent pregnancy at this point in their relationship.

Materials: Handouts: *Are We or Aren't We?* and *Completed Questionnaires*

Time: 30 minutes

Planning Notes:

1. Have the completed questionnaires from the first activity on hand and ready to redistribute. Make sure you've reviewed them briefly so you have some indication of each person and each couple's profile.
2. Plan to collect the questionnaires again at the end of the activity so you can retain them as a pre-survey for evaluation purposes.
3. While you don't have time to go into the issue here, be prepared to refer any couples who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy to additional info/resources for healthy pregnancies, prenatal care, etc.

Procedure:

1. **Questionnaires (5 minutes):** Redistribute the questionnaires that participants completed at the beginning of the session. Make these points:
 - You completed these questionnaires when you first walked into the room today. Look back at your answers and think about them in light of all of our discussions.
 - There are a couple of things we're going to ask you to discuss with your partner now. Question #5 asks if you plan to have another child in the next year and question #6 asks how you would feel if you got pregnant in the next year.
 - Some people feel clear about their plans for more children and others feel ambivalent (have mixed feelings). Check your answers. If you said you weren't planning on having a baby in the next year and you'd be a lot or a little unhappy if you/your partner got pregnant, then your feelings are pretty clear. If you said you weren't planning on having a baby but you'd be a little or a lot happy about it, you're ambivalent. That means, although you aren't planning on having a baby, you're very open to the possibility. It's normal to have ambivalent feelings, but folks who are ambivalent tend to be a lot less motivated to use birth control to prevent pregnancy.
 - Also look at questions #3 and #4 which ask what method you're using now and whether you use it every time you have sex. If you said that you were not planning on having another baby in the next year and you/your partner are not using a method (or don't use it every time), then it's time to step back and really consider where you stand on this issue. If you're not actively and carefully trying to prevent a pregnancy, then you're actually trying to get pregnant.
2. **Handout and Instructions (3 minutes):** Take a few minutes to hear reactions to what you've just said. Distribute the *Are We or Aren't We?* handout. Review the handout which guides the couples in sharing their responses to the questionnaire. Give these instructions:
 - Sit together as a couple facing each other, knee to knee.

- Take turns sharing your responses to each question on the handout.
 - When your partner is talking, use your listening skills to make sure you are really hearing what they are saying.
 - We're going to be checking in with each couple to see how the conversation is going and provide any support that you might want.
 - Compare your answers to see if you agree or disagree on most things.
3. **Partner Conversations (17 minutes):** Have the couples begin their conversations. Float around observing the couples. After about 7-8 minutes, start checking in with each of the couples. Get a sense of how things are going and provide support to any couples that need assistance.
 4. **Processing (5 minutes):** Reconvene the group. Find out how things went for the couples. Ask:
 - For those who plan to get pregnant in the next year, think back to the “In Their Shoes” activity we did earlier. How would a new baby impact your family life—finances, housing, etc.? What’s your plan for taking care of yourself so that you have a healthy pregnancy and baby?
 - How many of you had to admit that because you are not actively and carefully trying to prevent pregnancy, you’re actually setting yourself up to get pregnant?
 - If you realize now that you’ve been behaving as if you’re trying to get pregnant and you aren’t happy about that, how open are you to trying to use a birth control method more effectively?
 5. **Collect the questionnaires again.** Tell participants that you will continue to focus on these issues for one more session. Encourage the couples to keep talking about how they want to space and time any future pregnancies.