



Communication Issues Breakdown Checklist

Individually & Relationally

Check all that applies to your experience—individually or in your relationship. There are no right or wrong answers.

Individually

Inner Struggles

- ☐ I struggle to identify what I'm feeling.
- ☐ I fear being vulnerable or misunderstood.
- ☐ I assume people will respond negatively if I express my needs.
- ☐ I shut down or get overwhelmed during emotional conversations.
- ☐ I replay conversations in my head and criticize myself afterward.

Speaking Up

- ☐ I have trouble putting my thoughts into words.
- ☐ I avoid saying what I really think or feel.
- ☐ I get defensive or raise my voice without meaning to.
- ☐ I talk a lot but don't feel truly heard.
- ☐ I keep things in until they come out all at once.

Listening & Receiving

- ☐ I interrupt or plan my response while the other person is speaking.
- ☐ I often feel blamed or attacked, even if the person is being calm.
- ☐ I assume bad intentions or take things personally.
- ☐ I struggle to validate or empathize with perspectives different from mine.
- ☐ I tune out, dissociate, or feel emotionally flooded/overwhelmed.

Relationally

Recurring Patterns

- ☐ We get stuck in the same arguments over and over.
- ☐ One of us tends to pursue while the other withdraws.
- ☐ We struggle to repair after conflict or misunderstandings.
- ☐ We blame, keep score, or use sarcasm during tension.
- ☐ We don't talk about what's really bothering us until it's too late.



Mismatch in Communication Styles

- ☐ We prefer different forms of communication (text vs. in-person).
- ☐ We disagree on when or how quickly things should be addressed.
- ☐ One of us needs emotional processing; the other prefers problem-solving.
- ☐ We often misunderstand each other's tone or intent.
- ☐ We have different comfort levels with conflict or emotional expression.

Skills We'd Like to Strengthen

- ☐ Using "I" statements and naming feelings clearly
- ☐ Practicing active, non-defensive listening
- ☐ Setting and respecting boundaries
- ☐ Checking in about relationship needs
- ☐ Having hard conversations without escalating

Your Top 3 Priorities

Now please review your list and decide which three goals you would first want to discuss/change. Why did you rank them in that order?

First:

Second:

Third:



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Family of Origin

How communication was modeled in your family can shape how you relate to others today. Use this worksheet to explore the patterns you learned growing up.

Emotional Expression

- ☐ Emotions weren't openly discussed in my family.
- ☐ I was discouraged from showing anger, sadness, or vulnerability.
- ☐ I was expected to stay "strong" or "positive," even when upset.
- ☐ I had to hide my feelings to avoid conflict or burdening others.
- ☐ Certain emotions were seen as "bad," "dramatic," or "disrespectful."

Conflict & Disagreement

- ☐ Conflict was avoided, denied, or considered shameful.
- ☐ When conflict happened, it was intense, chaotic, or hurtful.
- ☐ There was little to no repair or follow-up after fights.
- ☐ Disagreeing with adults was viewed as talking back or being ungrateful.
- ☐ I never saw healthy disagreement or emotional repair modeled.

Communication Style

- ☐ One person's voice dominated the household.
- ☐ Silence or withdrawal was used to express anger or control.
- ☐ I often had to guess what people were feeling or needing.
- ☐ Criticism, blame, or sarcasm were common forms of communication.
- ☐ Encouragement, affection, or direct praise was rare.

Boundaries & Truth-Telling

- ☐ Saying "no" was not allowed or seen as rude.
- ☐ There was little respect for privacy or autonomy.
- ☐ There were topics we were told not to talk about (e.g., sex, grief, race, religion, abuse).
- ☐ I felt responsible for managing adults' emotions.
- ☐ I learned to withhold my truth to stay safe or accepted.



Lasting Impact

- ☐ I'm afraid to express my needs or feelings in current relationships.
- ☐ I avoid conflict or shut down when things get tense.
- ☐ I feel uncomfortable with emotional closeness or intimacy.
- ☐ I find myself repeating communication patterns from childhood.
- ☐ I sometimes don't know what healthy communication actually looks like.

Patterns I Want to Explore, Heal, or Unlearn

Use the space below to name the top 3 family communication patterns you want to reflect on more deeply.

First:

Second:

Third:

After completing, please save as a PDF and email to myronkrys@thedepthcollective.com.