

# Mental Notes

A Monthly Newsletter

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## FAIR FIGHTING

how to have a win-win relationship

by Erin Pirrung, M.Ed. Intern

Healthy relationships bring happiness and health to our lives, but even in the best of relationships, some conflicts and arguments arise. Conflict in a relationship does not mean that you don't like each other, it only means there is something you disagree upon. Here are some tips you can use to "fight fair" when trying to navigate conflict in your relationship.

- Negotiate a time to talk about the conflict. Don't have difficult conversations when you are very tired or angry.
- Don't criticize! Attack the problem, not the other person.
- Don't assign feelings or motives. Let others speak for themselves and allow them to explain.
- Stay with the topic. Don't use a current concern as a reason to jump into everything that bothers you.

- Say "I'm sorry" when you're wrong. It goes a long way in making things right again!
- Don't assume things. When we feel close to someone it's easy to think that we know how they think or feel and we can be very wrong.
- Ask for help if you need it. Talk with someone who can help you find resolution like a friend or an RA, or make an appointment with Counseling Services.
- Be prepared to compromise or disagree about some things.
- Don't hold grudges.
- The goal is for everyone to be a winner. Healthy relationships are between winners who seek answers to their problems together.
- Remember that you have the right to leave a relationship. Loyalty is very important but if things are not working out, you do have the right to leave.

## NOW WHAT?

*maintaining therapeutic change*

by Courtney Bourgeois, M.Ed. Intern

Those who have participated in counseling know that ending therapy can be a time of mixed emotions. Part of you may be excited to have accomplished your therapeutic goals. Another part of you may fear a return to the symptoms, thoughts, or behaviors which prompted you to engage in counseling in the first place. Following are a few suggestions for maintaining therapeutic change.

First, identify in advance high-risk situations that may trigger problematic thoughts and behaviors. Triggers can be negative emotional or physical states, social conflict or pressure, a particular place or even certain people. Once you've identified your triggers, develop a plan to avoid your triggers and thus prevent a return to problematic patterns. When making a plan, be specific, realistic, relevant, and practical, i.e., make certain the plan fits your lifestyle.

Second, if a slip occurs---and slips often occur---learn to control the way you view the situation. Remember that no one is perfect and that it's OK to make a mistake. A slip-up does not make you a failure. It may be helpful to think about your mistake in terms of a response or reaction to your trigger rather than as a negative reflection of your character. It might also be helpful to view your slip as a learning opportunity which can provide additional insight into problematic dynamics and behavior patterns and, thus, allow for additional growth and understanding.

In sum, preparation and a positive reframing of "slip-ups" are two ways of maintaining therapeutic gains and supporting continued growth long after you've finished counseling. For more information or to speak with a counselor, call UNO Counseling Services at 504-280-6683.



### Personal Growth Workshops

#### Romance 101

Nov. 6 12:30-1:30PM  
110 Human Performance Center

#### Personality 101

Nov. 11 12:30-1:30PM  
110 Human Performance Center

#### Couples & Relationships

Nov. 18 12:30-1:30PM  
Kirschman Hall 401

For disability-related accommodations, please call 280-6683.

### Relaxation Sessions

November 6

November 20

December 4



Time:

3:00 - 3:50PM

Location:

Kirschman Hall 401

For disability-related accommodations, please call 280-6683.