

City of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program

How to Recover From an Argument

Arguments between couples happen. While we can't go back in time to avoid them, we are able to recover in a way that allows for growth and increased connection.

Dr. Julie and John Gottman, prominent researchers in the field of couples counseling, offer a framework for making the best after an argument.

Set the stage:

- Am I calm enough to have a challenging conversation?
- Am I willing to understand my partner's side of things without trying to "win" or persuade them?
- Am I able to emotionally detach enough to see the incident from a distance without getting wrapped up in emotions?
- Are we free from distractions to best be fully present?

Step 1: Express how you felt during the argument. Take turns using "I" statements to describe the feelings. *"I felt misunderstood...unappreciated...stubborn."* It is critical **NOT** to explain why you felt those feelings and do **NOT** comment on your partner's feelings.

Step 2: Share your side and validate their perspective. Again, speak only for yourself with "I" statements. *"I noticed...I heard...I thought...I understood that..."* Avoid using *"you said...you did or didn't do."* During your turn as the listener, the goal is try to understand the other's perspective. Summarize the other's perspective as they saw and experienced

it. *"When that happened you felt upset, angry, disappointed. Did I get it right?"* Validating doesn't mean agreeing, rather, it conveys understanding. Therefore, it is important **NOT** to correct your partner or defend your side. The goal in this step is for each to feel listened to and understood. This builds trust and improves communication.

Step 3: Identify and disclose your triggers. We all have emotional triggers. These triggers usually stem from personal histories and hang-ups from our past that often turn minor events into major blowups. *"I have a sensitivity to feeling disrespected."* Disclosing and validating each others triggers presents an opportunity to learn more about each other.

Step 4: Take ownership of your part of the conflict. There is no perfect world or perfect people, we all make mistakes. Acknowledge and communicate them. *"I've been feeling stressed and irritable from work, which made me overly sensitive. I'm sorry for yelling at you."* Apologize for your part and forgive your partner.

Part 5: Prevention. Identify and state one thing you are willing to do to make it better next time. Then share one thing you think your partner can do. It is important to make the request positive. *"I need to know more about when you feel stressed out"* versus *"I need you to stop being a jerk."* The goal is focus on what you both can agree on.

Recovery from arguments are both possible and an opportunity to strengthen your relationship.

Employee Assistance Program



City of Milwaukee EAP

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EAP Contact

Cris Zamora

200 E. Wells St. #706

Ph. 414-286-3145

Email:

czamora@milwaukee.gov



The Snooze Button

The alarm clock “snooze” function was first introduced in 1956 as an option to gently wake up instead of being jolted awake. It is also a safety net against falling back asleep and being late.

Recent neuroscience research indicates that pressing snooze has very little benefit and can even be counter productive toward restful sleep.

People experience five sleep cycles, each lasting 90-110 minutes. These cycles range from light sleep to deep sleep (REM/rapid eye movement). To feel rested, people need to spend enough time in REM, which happens to be the last sleep cycle. The amount of time in REM increases throughout the night.

Falling back asleep after pressing snooze disrupts our ability to enter and complete a REM cycle. Our sleep then becomes fragmented and we wake up feeling groggy.

Tips to avoid the snooze button

- Keep the alarm out of easy reach.
- Turn on the lights. Lights help our brain release serotonin, a hormone helpful in feeling alert.
- Set the coffee pot to start brewing 10 minutes before your alarm. The smell of coffee will help you feel more awake.
- Drink water. Drinking a glass of water replaces fluids lost overnight.

EAP Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist employees who develop behavioral/emotional problems that may directly affect their work performance, and to provide Key Personnel with policy and procedural guidelines for the management of these problems.

Wellness Resources

- For information about current Wellness programs and services, visit: www.milwaukee.gov/WYCM
- The City’s Workplace Clinic provides free, convenient, onsite and virtual health care services for employees and spouses regardless of enrollment in the City’s health insurance and dependents (18 mos and older) on the City’s health insurance. Call 414-777-3413 to schedule an in-person or virtual visit.
- The City of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program web page houses topical information and resources on a wide range of work-life issues. Visit: <https://city.milwaukee.gov/DER/EAP>
- The City of Milwaukee offers a free Care.com membership through Care@Work to employees. A Care.com membership provides unlimited access to a platform employees can use to find and manage care for children, seniors, pets and their home. Visit www.milwaukee.gov/careatwork to learn more.

Stress

Below are strategies and tips to manage stress, anxiety or worry.

- **Unplug.** Take a break from social media and negative news cycles. Consider limiting your consumption of news and social media to a certain time of the day.
- **Take time to be still.** Trying to keep pace with demands and obligations is exhausting. Take a few minutes every day to meditate, pray, stretch and breath.
- **Connect with those that care about you.** A 75-year Harvard study on happiness found that participants who maintained meaningful relationships were the most happy as compared to those that didn’t. Positive relationships are the greatest factor in keeping us happier, healthier and alive longer.
- **Take care of your body.**
Eat healthy. Incorporate fruits, vegetables, lean protein, whole grains and limit unhealthy fats. Move more. Get up, stretch and move. Even a brisk walk helps. Get enough sleep. Strive for at least seven hours of sleep nightly, keep regular bed/wake hours.
- **Limit alcohol consumption.** If you choose to drink, do so in moderation (2 drinks or less a day for men/1 drink a day for women).