

# Reducing Parental Conflict

## Toolkit Resource: Thoughts, Feelings, Behaviour

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An activity which practitioners can print out and use with parents.

### Explaining what we are are really feeling. How our assumptions can create conflict.

When we interact with others their words and behaviour will make us think and feel things that will be triggered by our past experiences. For example, when we are in a romantic relationship, we may see our partner looking repeatedly at their mobile phone when we are spending leisure time together. If we have had past experiences with this or another partner of being 'taken for granted, ignored, not valued or cheated on', then this behaviour may create these feelings which may then show themselves as anger, criticism, contempt, defensiveness or stonewalling. These underlying feelings and behaviours can result in a negative cycle.

Think about these questions to help you understand what is really going on for you and your co-parent: Try and get into the habit of thinking about how your co-parent's behaviour or communication makes you feel, being honest about that feeling and then explaining why you have reacted in the way you have at the time. You can apply this process to any issue between you and your co-parent. This is about explaining how you feel. This will begin the process of resolving the conflict, by allowing each of you to see the other's perspective.

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When you **do** \_\_\_\_\_

I think \_\_\_\_\_

and I feel \_\_\_\_\_

then I (do or say) \_\_\_\_\_

When you **say** \_\_\_\_\_

I think \_\_\_\_\_

and I feel \_\_\_\_\_

then I (do or say) \_\_\_\_\_