

Opening Relationships: Worksheet

Instructions: Utilize this worksheet alongside the article titled "Opening Relationships: Therapist's Guide" as a tool to delve into essential aspects when contemplating opening up your relationship with your partner.

What type of open relationship am I interested in exploring with my partner?

- Open Relationship
 Polyamory
 Swinging
 Monogamish
 Relationship Anarchy
 Polyfidelity
 Solo Polyamory
 Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT)
 Hierarchical Polyamory
 Kitchen Table Polyamory
 Other: _____

| REFLECTIONS | What are my? | How can I address these when setting up my open relationship? |
|--|-------------------|---|
| Motivations: Why am I considering opening up my relationship? | | |
| Desires: What do I hope to gain from an open relationship? | | |
| Insecurities: What are my concerns or fears about opening my relationship? | | |
| Resources: What resources can we devote to opening our relationship? What are the limits on our resources? | | |

Assessment Tool: Communication Readiness for Opening Your Relationship

Opening up a relationship requires strong communication skills to navigate new dynamics and ensure both partners are on the same page. Use this assessment to evaluate your current communication readiness for embarking on this journey:

Instructions: Answer each question honestly by selecting the response that best reflects your current communication practices with your partner.

Scoring: After completing the assessment, tally your points based on your responses to each question. Use the scoring guide below to interpret your results.

| QUESTIONS | Rarely or Never | Occasionally | Sometimes | Often | Very Often |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| How often do you and your partner have open and honest conversations about your feelings and concerns? | | | | | |
| How often are you comfortable sharing difficult or uncomfortable topics with your partner? | | | | | |
| How often do you actively listen to your partner's perspective without interrupting or becoming defensive? | | | | | |
| When discussing sensitive topics, how often do you and your partner practice active listening and validate each other's feelings? | | | | | |
| How often do you and your partner seek external help, like a therapist, when facing challenges in your relationship? | | | | | |
| How often do you and your partner engage in open discussions about your needs, desires, and expectations in the relationship? | | | | | |
| How often do you handle disagreements or conflicts successfully with your partner? | | | | | |

Communication Readiness Scoring Guide

Add up your points based on the following scale for each question:

Rarely or never = 1 point; Occasionally = 2 points; Sometimes = 3 points; Often = 4 points; Very often = 5 points

Interpretation:

7 - 14 points: Your communication readiness might be low. Consider working on improving your communication skills before opening the relationship.

15 - 28 points: Your communication readiness is moderate. Focus on enhancing your communication skills to effectively handle the demands of opening the relationship.

29 - 35 points: Your communication readiness is good. Continue building on your existing communication skills to navigate the challenges of opening the relationship.

36 - 42 points: Your communication readiness is strong. Your existing communication skills will likely help you navigate the demands of opening the relationship effectively.

Remember, improving communication is an ongoing process. If your assessment indicates room for improvement, consider working on active listening, open dialogue, and seeking professional guidance to enhance your communication skills before opening your relationship.

Opening Relationships- Defining Boundaries

Instructions: Utilize this space to facilitate a constructive discussion with your partner about defining boundaries and creating mutually agreeable rules and agreements that ensure both partners' comfort and satisfaction.

| Boundary Domain | Rules | Agreements |
|-----------------------------|-------|------------|
| Physical Boundaries | | |
| Emotional Boundaries | | |
| Time Availability | | |
| Communication | | |

| Boundary Domain | Rules | Agreements |
|-----------------------------|-------|------------|
| Existing Commitments | | |
| Public vs Private | | |
| Ex-partners | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Opening Relationships: Therapist's Guide – Main Points Recap

Introduction:

- Discuss boundaries, needs, expectations, and logistics before opening a relationship.
- Brainstorm and communicate before diving into an open relationship.
- Use prompts to facilitate discussions and build a healthy foundation.

Open The Relationship - Defining Terms:

- Different types of open relationships: open relationships, polyamory, swinging, monogamish, relationship anarchy, polyfidelity, solo polyamory, hierarchical polyamory, don't ask don't tell, kitchen table polyamory.
- All structures require awareness, consent, and ongoing communication.

Opening the Relationship - What do you want? And what is possible?

- Reflect individually before discussing with a partner.
- Journal, talk to friends, or consult a therapist.
- Identify motivations, desires, insecurities about opening.
- Understand personal emotional needs, jealousy, communication, and compersion.
- Consider time, energy, accidental pregnancy, STIs, timing, and infidelity.
- Both partners should benefit, not just one.
- Use prompts as groundwork for opening up in the future.

Opening the Relationship - Requires Good Communication:

- Prioritize honest and open communication.
- Seek help from therapists or mediators for tough conversations.
- Therapists assist with healthy communication tools.
- Communicate kindly and clearly when setting boundaries.
- Assess communication skills, comfort with difficult talks, honesty levels.
- Practice transparent communication for better conversations.

Opening the Relationship - Defining Boundaries:

- Establish rules and agreements for boundaries.
- Distinguish rules (concrete) from agreements (flexible).
- Ensure mutual agreement, no coercion, regular review.
- Regular check-ins for ongoing reassessment.
- Rules and agreements ensure open communication, trust, respect.

Physical Boundaries:

- Discuss expectations for sexual intimacy with new partners.
- Set guidelines for protection, safer sex, testing, consent.

Emotional Boundaries:

- Explore emotional connections within the open relationship.
- Discuss acceptable emotional involvement, disclosure.
- Respect emotional well-being, discuss support, understand hierarchy.

Communication Boundaries:

- Set communication guidelines for sharing experiences.
- Determine level of detail for discussing other relationships.
- Emphasize open communication, respect for sensitive topics.

Time and Availability Boundaries:

- Discuss time and energy allocation to outside relationships.
- Schedule quality time with primary partner to prevent neglect.
- Balance and consideration of all parties' needs.

Boundaries around Existing Commitments:

- Discuss existing commitments like children, finances, living arrangements.
- Respect commitments within the open relationship.
- Integrate open relationship with existing responsibilities.

Public vs. Private Boundaries:

- Determine desired privacy level for the open relationship.
- Set boundaries on sharing information with others.
- Respect privacy preferences, find a balance.

Boundaries with Ex-partners:

- Discuss interactions with ex-partners in the open relationship.
- Establish boundaries, respectful engagement.

Conclusion:

- Emphasize the importance of boundaries for a healthy dynamic.
- Highlight open communication, active listening, adaptability.
- Successful open relationships honor and navigate boundaries.