

# Are We Ready for Couples Therapy?

Couples therapy works best when both partners are willing to engage in certain emotional capacities - not perfectly, just **willing to try**.

This guide isn't about passing a test. It's about noticing where you are and what you may need before diving into this work.

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## 1. Are We Both Willing to Show Up Emotionally?

Therapy asks partners to talk about:

**Ask yourselves:**

- feelings
- fears
- hopes
- hurts
- longings

You don't need to be great at it - just open to trying.

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- Am I willing to speak about how *I feel*, not just what I *think*?
- Am I open to exploring softer emotions underneath anger or distance?
- Can I attempt vulnerability, even if it's uncomfortable?

## 2. Are We Willing to Consider Our Own Role in Our Patterns?

Couples therapy is NOT about:

**Ask yourselves:**

- proving who is right
- gathering evidence
- blaming the other

It's about understanding the *cycle* you've been caught in.

- Can I reflect on how I contribute to the tension between us?
- Am I open to learning something about myself in this process?

It's okay if the answer feels like "maybe."

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### 3. Do We Want Emotional Connection (even if it feels distant)?

Even if conflict or hurt is present...

Do you want:

- closeness?
- trust?
- safety with each other?
- to feel chosen, valued, seen?

**Ask yourselves:**

- Do I still care about this relationship?
- Is there part of me that hopes connection is possible again? Even a small “yes” matters.

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### 4. Are We Willing to Listen and Be Impacted by Each Other?

Connection requires:

- curiosity
- empathy
- Responsiveness

**Ask yourselves:**

- When my partner shares something painful, can I try to hear it?
- Can I try to soften instead of defend?

You don't have to get it perfect — just make the effort.

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### 5. Are We Coming to Therapy to Explore, Not Judge?

Therapy won't work if the goal is to:

- get a verdict
- judge the partner
- decide if they're “good enough”
- gather evidence against them

Therapy *will* work if the goal is to:

- understand each other
- learn new ways of connecting
- explore needs and emotions
- build a healthier bond

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### 6. Is At Least One of Us Willing to Take Emotional Risks?

Sometimes one partner goes first.

One person's vulnerability can invite vulnerability in the other.

## Ask yourselves:

- Can one of us lead with openness, even if the other feels guarded?
- Can we be patient with each other while we learn new emotional skills?

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## Signs You Might Not Be Ready (yet)

It may be worth preparing more before starting couples therapy if either partner is:

- completely shut down emotionally
- unwilling to share inner feelings
- focused solely on blame
- uninterested in connection

- wanting therapy to “fix the other person”
- using therapy only to decide whether to leave

Those are understandable states — but they may require individual work first.

## You Don't Have to Be “Good at Feelings”

Couples therapy is a *learning space*.

You don't need:

You just need:

- eloquent emotional vocabulary
- deep psychological insight
- total certainty about the relationship

- curiosity
- a little hope
- willingness to try

You just need enough openness to lean in.

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## A Gentle Bottom Line

Couples therapy can help you if:

- you want more connection
- you want to feel emotionally understood
- you are willing to learn new ways of relating
- you are open to seeing each other differently

If you're unsure, ambivalent, scared — that's normal. Therapy is a safe place to explore those feelings too.