

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.

1. Are We Both Willing to Show Up Emotionally?

Therapy asks partners to talk about:

- feelings
- fears
- hopes
- hurts
- longings

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

Ask yourselves:

- 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:

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

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

Ask yourselves:

- 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."

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.

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.

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

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 just need:

- curiosity
- a little hope
- willingness to try

You don't need:

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

You just need enough openness to lean in.

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.