

What We Need to Grow

A needs inventory for understanding yourself and your partner

Complete one copy per partner. Start on your own; bring your answers to therapy.

Initials / preferred name:

Date:

Start with curiosity

There are no right answers. Needs may change with stress, pregnancy, parenting, health, or identity changes. Both partners deserve respect, choice, and care. You may skip any prompt and discuss it with your therapist.

A need is what matters to you. A request is one possible way to meet it. For example: connection is a need; asking for ten minutes together is a request. A partner can say yes, no, or suggest another way.

1. Notice what matters right now

Check needs that matter to you this week. Choose up to three as priorities on page 2.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Feeling heard | ☐ Emotional reassurance |
| ☐ Respect for my identity | ☐ Affection with consent |
| ☐ Shared time / connection | ☐ Privacy / personal space |
| ☐ Predictability / follow-through | ☐ Fair sharing of tasks |
| ☐ Parenting teamwork | ☐ Rest / recovery |
| ☐ Practical or financial clarity | ☐ Acceptance / belonging |
| ☐ Honesty / trust | ☐ Support during change |
| ☐ Play / enjoyment | ☐ Room for different feelings |

Another need:

Use this to explore, not to score your partner. If sharing feels unsafe or brings fear of retaliation, complete it privately and review with your therapist first.

My Needs, in My Words

Complete privately before comparing answers

2. Turn needs into clear, flexible requests

Name your top three needs. Describe a small action that could help. Avoid labels such as "you never care." Try: "I feel overwhelmed. I need support. Would you handle bedtime twice this week?"

Priority 1 - My need:

How met does this feel? 0 = not met, 10 = well met:

A recent example, and one small request that could help:

Priority 2 - My need:

How met does this feel? 0 = not met, 10 = well met:

A recent example, and one small request that could help:

Priority 3 - My need:

How met does this feel? 0 = not met, 10 = well met:

A recent example, and one small request that could help:

What can I do myself, or ask another support person to help with?

From Guessing to Understanding

Your partner is the expert on their own experience

3. What I think my partner needs

These are guesses, not facts. Complete this page privately, then ask your partner to confirm or correct your understanding in session.

1. I think my partner needs... What have I noticed that led me to this guess?

2. I think my partner needs... What have I noticed that led me to this guess?

3. I think my partner needs... What have I noticed that led me to this guess?

One question I can ask instead of making an assumption:

4. Notice the pattern, not a flaw in your partner

Give the difficult pattern a name, such as "the overwhelm loop." Think about what invites it in and when the two of you have handled it differently.

What helps us feel like a team when this pattern shows up?

Our Small Steps Together

Review with your therapist, then choose a realistic practice

5. Listen, check, and clarify

Take turns for about 3 minutes each. The speaker shares one need and request. The listener says: "What I hear you need is... Did I get that right?" The speaker corrects or adds details. Understanding does not require immediate agreement.

What did we learn or correct about each other's needs?

6. Make one doable agreement for each partner

Keep actions specific, voluntary, and realistic. If a request does not work, explore another way to support the same need. Consent and personal boundaries remain each person's choice.

Partner A: Need + agreed action + when / how often:

Partner B: Need + agreed action + when / how often:

If either of us feels overwhelmed, how will we pause and agree on a time to return?

Check-in date:

At our check-in: What helped? What needs adjusting?