

Reaction Rules

Definition: rules that guide responses to a partner's feelings, actions, or particular situations.

How to Create Reaction Rules

Reaction Rules should be a cooperative effort between you and your non-spectrum partner or spouse. Sit down together and follow these basic how-to steps to come up with Reaction Rules you both agree to.

1. List your emotions. Make a list of emotions you experience frequently. Have your partner list the emotions she experiences frequently.
2. Describe what each emotion looks or sounds like. Be brief, but provide each other with one or two clues that indicate which emotion is being experienced.
3. Ask each other what you like or need for each feeling. For example, maybe your partner likes a hug when she is sad. Perhaps you prefer time alone when you are sad.
4. Discuss what an appropriate response to the emotion could be based on personal preferences and needs. Throw out any notions of what the response should be. Instead, think of a response that the receiver needs and would like and what the giver can give without distress.

Comic Strip Conversations



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