

Therapeutic Separation Agreement Instructions

Therapeutic separation is:

1. A time of constructive re-evaluation of the relationship
2. A commitment to the therapeutic process of rebuilding the relationship'
3. An effort to improve couple dynamics by creating increased intentionality around time spent together, shared responsibilities and boundaries.

The most constructive therapeutic separations begin with a clear, specific agreement between partners. If you are embarking on a therapeutic separation, it is essential to answer the following questions. It is often helpful for a professional counselor to facilitate the negotiations for the agreement. Couples who are separated and cannot agree on the answers to these questions should recognize that they may be progressing toward divorce.

Typical recommendations include:

1. Separate residences
2. Sexual abstinence
3. A mutual commitment to couples therapy
4. Boundaries and limits around contact and time spent together

Instructions:

- a) Find a quiet location of "neutral ground" where you will not be interrupted.
- b) Each partner should answer the questions separately.
- c) Discuss each question in therapy until you reach agreement. Be very specific and concrete in your answers.
- d) Be flexible in seeking agreements and compromises.

Therapeutic Separation Agreement Form

1. Length of the therapeutic separation? (a specific period time i.e. 6 months).
2. List specific problems or issues which led to this separation.
3. State the financial agreements, living arrangements and division of household responsibilities for this period.
4. Specific plans for visits, dates or other contacts between partners. Start with manageable amounts of contact and structured activities (2-3 hours several times per week) and go from there.

5. Commitment to counseling/therapy (frequency, individuals/couples, with whom). What topic of conversation will be reserved for the therapist's office (disclosure information, sexual acting out behaviors, the future of the relationship)?

6. Plans for discussing the separation with your children and time with children.

7. Will date other people during the separation?
 - Yes
 - No

8. Is there anything which could happen to cause one or both of you to end the separation and proceed immediately to break up or divorce? Be specific.

9. What changes will each partner need to make to renew the relationship commitment? What boundaries do each of you need during the separation?

Signature

Date

Signature

Date