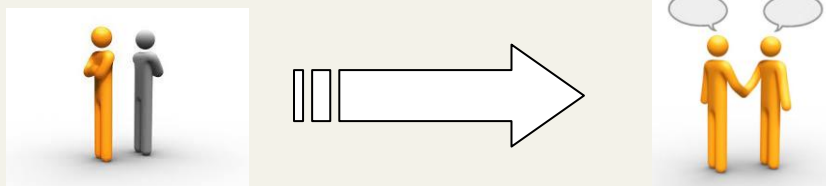


Fair Fighting: Ground Rules

- ❖ **Remain calm.** Try not to overreact to difficult situations.
- ❖ **Express feelings in words, not actions.** Telling someone directly and honestly how you feel can be a very powerful form of communication.
- ❖ **Be specific about what is bothering you.** Vague complaints are hard to work on.
- ❖ **Deal with only one issue at a time.** Don't introduce other topics until each is fully discussed.
- ❖ **No "hitting below the belt."** Attacking areas of personal sensitivity creates an atmosphere of distrust, anger, and vulnerability.
- ❖ **Avoid accusations.** Accusations will cause others to defend themselves. Instead, talk about how someone's actions made you feel.
- ❖ **Don't generalize.** Avoid words like "never" or "always."
- ❖ **Avoid "make believe."** Exaggerating or inventing a complaint - or your feelings about it - will prevent the real issues from surfacing. Stick with the facts and your honest feelings.
- ❖ **Don't stockpile.** Storing up lots of grievances and hurt feelings over time is counterproductive. Try to deal with problems as they arise.
- ❖ **Avoid clamming up.** When one person becomes silent and stops responding to the other, frustration and anger can result. Positive results can only be attained with two-way communication.



Source: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/fightingfair.html#6>