Am I Crazy?
Making Sense Of The Emotions
Am I Crazy? How Can I Make Sense Of These Emotions?
Reflection Questions

Grab a pen and paper and reflect in your journal or on paper about what you have read, learned, and heard from your partner in this section. Journaling is helpful for gathering your thoughts and feelings so you can share with your partner more effectively during your conversations and the Conversations Exercises we provide in this program.

1. What are your thoughts about emotion?
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2. What concerns do you have about sharing emotion at this point?
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3. What primary emotions have you identified for yourself and for your partner so far?
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4. What secondary emotions have you identified for yourself and for your partner so far?
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5. What might hold you back from being completely open about your feelings currently?
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6. Paint a picture of what your conversations would look like if they were to go perfectly.
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7. When you look into your partner’s face what do you see? Do you see sadness or hurt?
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8. Describe the facial expressions you see on their face. For example, you might see their mouth slight tense and curved downward when they’re sad or you might notice that their eyes become soft or hard.
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9. Try to think about the times you feel secondary, like a time you’ve been angry lately, what happened right before the moment you got angry? Can you identify what happened and maybe what you felt below the surface?

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10. Try writing out a typical scenario that you find you and your spouse getting caught in dialogue format. How does that go? Who says what? What issues or triggers cause you to fall into the same negative dialogue?

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11. As you answer these journal questions what feelings come up for you, right here, right now?
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12. Do you struggle to share your primary emotions and why?
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13. Do you have overwhelming questions that come up for you that keep you from opening up to your partner? Write about those here.
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14. What have you noticed about this process of sharing or writing about sharing?

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15. Do you see yourself or your partner differently since you’ve shared vulnerable primary emotions with each other?

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Emotion is a powerful agent for change and growth both internally and between the two of you. There are two types of emotions: primary and secondary. Throughout this program we will work to understand our and our partner’s primary and secondary emotions. Then we will work to understand how these emotions play out in our negative cycles.

**Secondary emotions:** These are our defense mechanisms. These are the emotions we show in order to protect ourselves from being hurt or being vulnerable. They are evidence of a wall or protective barrier a person puts in defense of themselves. Examples of these are anger, loneliness, bitterness, shutting down, and defensiveness, and of course criticalness, moodiness and irritability.

**Primary emotions:** are the underlying emotions that are usually buried deep inside. These can be uncomfortable to share and difficult to identify sometimes. Examples of these are hurt, fear, sadness, and feelings of unworthiness.

Another way to understand this is, “I get so angry when you ignore me. But I think I get angry because I feel like you turn away from me and that makes me sad to feel so distant from you.” An example of what this looks like is: “When you ignore me (this is an event/action that triggers a feeling) I feel sad (primary emotion) deep inside. But instead of showing my sadness (primary emotion), I get angry (secondary emotion).”
At the end of the action sheet you answered Reflection Questions. Use the reflection questions to help you fill in the conversation guide below.

When I consider sharing my emotions with my partner I feel

____________________________________________________________________________

When____________________________________________________________(event/issues) happens or come up I feel

(secondary emotion) but I usually show my partner_____________________________(primary emotion). When I share my secondary emotions my partner responds by

____________________________________________________________________________

The things that trigger my emotional responses are ___________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

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