

Be a lover, not a hater

Are you a Valentine's Day lover or hater? For some, it's a day of romance and a time to rekindle the flame. For others, it's a public reminder that their relationship is anything but the ideal. For those who are exchanging angry words instead of chocolates, the annual reminder of romance can be a bitter pill!

If you have a sour outlook on Valentine's Day, you aren't alone. Relationship problems with spouses and life partners are one of the main reasons people turn to an EAP for help. Here are some of the common relationship problems people bring to us:

Loss of trust – Trust problems may be due to a large issue like infidelity, the result of an ongoing problem like an addiction, or a gradual wearing away due to dishonesty or feelings of being treated unfairly. Once trust is broken, it can be difficult to regain.

Differences in priorities and goals – Early in a relationship, goals may be aligned but life is dynamic and we change and grow over time. This can make a relationship stronger or it can cause rifts. Differences can surface about career, family, values and more.

Poor communication – There are many ways to communicate poorly: Being too passive or too aggressive, stonewalling, insulting and failing to listen. The good news is that communicating productively is a skill that can be learned.

Distractions – Work demands, social media, friends and hobbies can all take a toll on relationships, leaving one party feeling neglected or unloved.

Money - Different priorities about finances, spending, savings and debt are the root cause of



many arguments and much stress. Debt counseling and financial advisors can often help.

Family matters - Child rearing, caring for aging parents, and relating to extended family can be repeated sources of stress and conflict.

Crisis and trauma - Major life problems such as handling death or loss, coping with a life-threatening or chronic illness, surviving a natural disaster or a crime, can all put extreme stress on a relationship.

Problems are a normal part of life; how couples weather their problems can lead to relationship growth or deterioration. Couples counseling is one way to try to address ongoing problems. Counseling can help to resolve a specific problem, create a safe space to work out difficult emotions or issues, lend insight into communication dynamics, and help to change unproductive patterns that cause conflict.

If you are having problems in a relationship, login to check out our self-help resources on our Member website. Explore articles and tools on relationships, as well as on some of the issues we've identified above. If you need more help, you can call your EAP 24-7 to speak with a counselor.