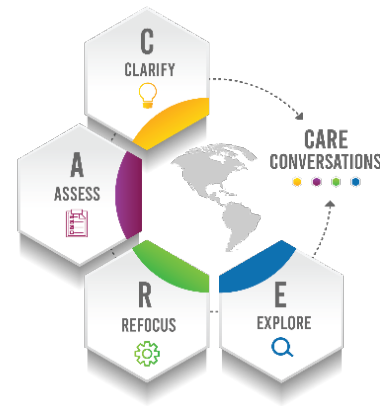



Exercise 4:

Conversation Starters, Generating Connection



 The opposite of social threat is social reward.

Aim: To create and sustain connection between the couple and create a safe space for collaborative conversations. Try to start each CARE Conversation with one of these conversation starters.

When the brain experiences social reward, cognitive function improves, and the person becomes more inclined to collaborate. It is good to start any conversation with the intention to collaborate, and this should surely be easier with the person you love.

Here are some ideas for conversation starters. Take a minute (uninterrupted) to tell your partner your answer and then switch. For the exercise to be meaningful, please be specific and say how you feel each time.

- *What did your partner do in the last week to make you feel heard and valued? For example, I felt really valued when you dropped everything to look after the kids so I could attend to the work emergency.*
- *Recall a favorite or significant memory you share.*
- *When have you laughed the most together? Recount the incident.*
- *What do you admire about your partner as a professional?*