

BEFORE COUPLES THERAPY:

A REFLECTION GUIDE FOR COUPLES

A gentle starting place for couples considering therapy.

This guide is designed to help you slow down, reflect, and notice patterns before starting couples therapy. There are no right or wrong answers. You don't need to agree. The goal is awareness, not fixing everything.

You can complete this together or separately and then compare notes if you choose to.



1. WHY WE'RE HERE

Take a moment to reflect on what led you to consider therapy.

- What made you start thinking about couples therapy now?
- Was there a specific moment, pattern, or feeling that stood out?
- What feels most urgent to address?

2. OUR RELATIONSHIP STRENGTHS

Therapy isn't only about problems - it's also about building on what's already working.

- What do you appreciate about your partner?
- When do you feel most connected to each other?
- What has helped you get through hard moments in the past?

3. CURRENT CHALLENGES & PATTERNS

Instead of focusing on *who* is the problem, notice *what* shows up between you.

- What arguments or tensions seem to repeat?
- What usually happens right before things escalate?
- How do each of you typically respond during conflict? (shut down, pursue, joke, withdraw, get loud, etc.)

4. EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Go beneath the surface behaviors.

- When conflict happens, what emotions come up for you?
- What do you most need from your partner in those moments?
- What do you think your partner might be feeling in these moments - even if they don't say it?

5. COMMUNICATION CHECK-IN

Reflect honestly, without judgment.

- What feels hardest to talk about?
- What topics tend to get avoided?
- When communication goes well, what's different?

6. HOPES FOR THERAPY

Therapy works best when you're clear on what you're hoping for.

- If therapy were helpful, what would be different in your relationship?
- What do you want more of together?
- What would feeling safer or more connected look like for you?

7. PERSONAL REFLECTION (INDIVIDUAL)

Take a moment to look inward.

- What patterns do I notice in myself during conflict?
- How do my past experiences influence how I show up in this relationship?
- What responsibility am I willing to take for change?

8. A GENTLE REMINDER

Starting therapy doesn't mean your relationship is failing. It often means:

- You care enough to look more closely.
- You want support navigating hard things.
- You're open to learning new ways of relating.

You don't have to have everything figured out to begin.

You're welcome to bring this guide into your first session or use it simply as a starting point for conversation.



INTERESTED IN TAKING THE NEXT STEP?

Couples therapy can help you slow down these patterns, understand each other more deeply, and create more secure connection.

Visit www.carpentercoupleandfamilycounseling.com to learn more about starting couples therapy in-person in Plano or online across Texas.