

COMMUNICATION OUTLINE

Fire Service/ shift work can exacerbate common relationship challenges

- Shift work can negatively impact communication (makes it more difficult) which then exacerbates issues
 - Limited communication at work
 - In work brain
 - Reduced focus
 - FF feeling helpless while at work
 - Difficulty transitioning out to work brain and into home brain
 - Treating home like a fire station
 - Not knowing how to get out of “fix it” and/or “problem solving” mode
 - SO turning to others for connection (friends, family)
 - SO learning to become so independent communication can slow or stop about certain things- SO just takes care to it or can do it faster/easier/the way they want it done
- In the absence of communication tend to fill in the blanks - usually with assumptions which are negative

Tips for communication in order to learn how to work with these fire service challenges

- Be intentional about setting aside time to talk everyday (especially when ff is home)
 - Pick a time of day that works with your schedule- even 10 minutes
 - Communication builds intimacy, connection, and reduces tension)
- Learn healthy communication skills (I stmts, active listening, conflict resolution)
- Don't stop dating
- Show mutual respect
- Have patience and be willing to compromise
- Love languages to learn what your partner needs to feel appreciated and loved
- Seek support and resources

Resources

Books-

7 Principles for Making Marriage Work- John Gottman
Fit for Off Duty: A Manual for Firefighters- Peter Salerno
Fully Involved- Mynda Ohs
I Love a Firefighter- Ellen Kirschman