



How to talk with your partner about what counts as cheating

Cut out the card along the dashed line (6 by about 4 inches). Say one line, then stop and listen. Use your own words when they come.

Talking about what counts as cheating

1. Pick a calm day, not the night after something happened.
2. Skip definitions. Go behavior by behavior: fine, tell me first, or not okay.
3. Mark the list separately, then compare.
4. For every "not okay," ask: would I be fine if you did exactly this?
5. Disagree? Try "tell me first" for a couple of months.
6. Write down what you agree. Look at it again once a year.

More lines from the page

- This is maybe a weird thing to bring up, but I'd rather do it now than find out the hard way. What counts as cheating for you? Like, actually where's the line?
- I've been weird about the messages with Daniel, and I'd rather say why than keep being weird. I'm not saying you did anything wrong. I think we just have different lines and we've never talked about them.
- We set our rules about this when we were twenty-four and nobody had Instagram. I think it's worth checking we still agree.
- I didn't think of it as cheating, but I can see it hurt you, and that matters more than whose definition is right. Can you tell me what it felt like from your side?
- Okay, that surprised me. What would it feel like for you if I did that?
- I don't think I can promise "never," but I can promise to tell you first. Would that be enough?
- Can we try it your way for a couple of months and see how we both feel?
- That's insane. Nobody thinks that's cheating.
- So you don't trust me.

If you are afraid of your partner, scripts are not the answer: call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788. In danger, call 911.