



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *Ten Tips for Fair Arguing*

MANCHESTER, N.H. – “There are times when people just don’t agree, or as the saying goes, “*we can agree to not agree,*” said Doug Stephens, Ed.D., M.S.W., LICSW, a licensed social worker at Pastoral Counseling Services (PCS), an independent, non-profit counseling and consulting center serving southern New Hampshire.

Stephens, author of *The Couples' Survival Workbook*, specializes in couple therapy and conflict resolution. “It’s important for both people to be prepared and work through the conflict without one or the other prolonging the fight, or in many situations, blindsiding the other person. Resolving conflicts can be done in a fair way with a few helpful tips to remember.”

#### *Ten Rules of Fair Arguing*

1. ***Schedule time for discussion:*** Don’t spring conflict on the other person when they have expectations for something pleasant and important to them.
2. ***Give topic in advance when discussing conflict:*** Here is what we need to talk about. Expectations are very important at each stage.
3. ***Keep each discussion to the critical topic:*** Limit discussion to those issues. No kitchen sinking.
4. ***Don’t store up transgressions:*** Discuss problems as soon after they occur or are discovered as is feasible.
5. ***Don’t prolong a fight needlessly:*** If you are getting nowhere, stop. Take a time-out and agree when you can continue the discussion. This is especially helpful when emotions have taken over. We need objectivity when we are trying to resolve conflicts.
6. ***Don’t tell the other person what they are doing or feeling:*** Stick to “I” statements. “YOU” statements are accusatory and set up for defensiveness.
7. ***Don’t drop the A-Bomb to kill fire ants:*** Keep your response appropriate to the problem’s scope and urgency.
8. ***Don’t hit below the belt:*** No name-calling, dredging up past sins to which the other confesses, or purposely-nasty remarks.
9. ***Resolving a conflict requires you to look at what you can change, not what the other person can change.***
10. ***Make up after the conflict:*** Once someone has said that he/she made a mistake and will try to avoid its recurrence, how much more can you ask.

With over 37 years of experience, **Doug** brings an impressive and diverse knowledge of psychotherapy to PCS. Currently, he serves as the Training Coordinator at PCS in which he develops and implements a clinical training program in which graduate students and postgraduate residents can complete clinical training. Dr. Stephens serves in the role of Adjunct Consultant for the Samaritan Institute, Inc. based in Denver, CO. He currently holds several licenses and certifications, including: AAPC Fellow; AAMFT Clinical Member and Approved Supervisor; Board Certified Diplomat; Clinical Social Work; NH Independent Licensed Clinical Social Work; NY Licensed Clinical Social Work; and, NY Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. In 2011 he co-authored with David Olsen, Ph.D. *The Couples' Survival Workbook*.

For more information or to schedule an appointment with Doug Stephens, call Pastoral Counseling Services at 603.627.2702. [www.pcs-nh.org](http://www.pcs-nh.org)

### **About Pastoral Counseling Services**

Pastoral Counseling Services (PCS) was founded in 1979 is celebrating 35 years and provides the best psychotherapeutic techniques while respecting the natural connection between the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions in the psychotherapy process. Our desire is to provide a community in which clients *Feel Heard, Feel Cared for and Feel Better*. In addition to our counseling services, PCS impacts the vitality of the community by partnering with other non-profit organizations to help underserved & at risk populations with stress management techniques. PCS also honors those who pursue extraordinary measures to strengthen communities and improve life in New Hampshire with the Good Samaritan Awards, an annual tradition since 1996.

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