

## Couples Under Stress

### Signs of Couple Stress:

- Increased agitation, arguments or emotional outbursts
- Short tempers
- Impatience
- Increase in abusive behavior
- Increased use of substances
- Attempt to control the other
- Distracting or forgetting conversations

### Remember:

- There are “normal” responses to stress
- It is difficult for couples to maintain increased tension
- It is difficult to manage an ongoing sense of uncertainty and a feeling of being unsafe
- Partners may unknowingly be taking frustrations out on the others
- The more helpless partners feel, the more anger and sadness is experienced

### What Couples Can Do:

- Acknowledge the unacceptable behavior to yourself and to your partner.
- Work to understand and work with what you DO have control over
- Talk, Talk, Talk – Talk to you partner about your experiences
- Listen, Listen, Listen – Be certain to listen as much as you talk
- Develop a game plan to reduce stress
- Seek professional support if negative interactions continue or increase