HANDS LIFTING HEARTS
INITIATIVES SOCIETY
RESOURCE 03

ONE CONVERSATION. DIFFERENT OUTCOMES.

Healthy relationships, communication & conflict resolution

For African, Black and Caribbean families, youth, and caregivers in Alberta

A conversation can go many ways. Follow a short story about financial stress, choose your responses, and see where each path leads.

Family Violence Prevention /
Breaking Silence, Building Safety

Sponsored by the Ministry of Children and Family Services, Government of Alberta

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Alberta Government

Start the conversation

Click a response to follow its path, or turn to the printed page and section number.

SECTION 1

You come home tired

The day has been heavy. Money has been tight lately. Your partner looks at you and says quietly: “We need to talk about expenses.” Your chest tightens. What do you say?

A	Can this wait? I just got home.	**§ 2 / p. 2**
B	You always bring this up at the worst time.	**§ 4 / p. 3**
C	I’m overwhelmed. Give me 10 minutes and I’ll sit with you.	**§ 6 / p. 3**

SECTION 2

Nothing exploded. Nothing was solved.

Dinner is quiet. No one mentions money again. Later that night, you both scroll your phones. The next day, you receive a message: “We still need to deal with this.” How do you respond?

A	Ignore the message	**§ 8 / p. 5**
B	We’ll figure it out somehow	**§ 9 / p. 5**
C	Let’s make a plan tonight	**§ 7 / p. 5**

OPTIONAL PAUSE / SECTION 3 / PAGE 4

How will you respond?

Follow the section named in your previous choice.

SECTION 4

Voices rise

Your partner’s face changes. “Because you never want to talk about it!” Voices rise. Someone leaves the room. Later, they say quietly: “You scared me just now.” What do you say?

A	You’re too sensitive	**§ 8 / p. 5**
B	Walk away silently	**§ 9 / p. 5**
C	I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have raised my voice	**§ 7 / p. 5**

OPTIONAL PAUSE / SECTION 5 / PAGE 4

SECTION 6

You come back calmer

You pause. You breathe. You come back calmer. You both sit with the bills. What do you say?

A	We’re in trouble because you overspend	**§ 4 / p. 3**
B	This is stressful for both of us	**§ 7 / p. 5**
C	Tell me what worries you most	**§ 7 / p. 5**

A moment to pause

Use these optional pauses, then return to your conversation.

SECTION 3

Pause for a moment

Sometimes silence feels calm now
and heavy later.

Return to the previous section and make a choice.

RETURN TO SECTION 2 / PAGE 2

SECTION 5

Take a breath

Notice what conflict feels like in your body:
faster thoughts, shorter words.

Return to the previous section when ready.

RETURN TO SECTION 4 / PAGE 3

Pause pages are optional. You can revisit a choice at any point.

Where your choices lead

Read the outcome for your path, then continue to the reflection.

SECTION 7 / OUTCOME

Working together

The problem is still real. But now you are solving it as a team. No one feels attacked. No one feels ignored. You make a plan.

Trust increases. Healthy communication is a skill that grows with practice.

SECTION 8 / OUTCOME

Harmful pattern

The conversation keeps turning into blame or intimidation. People begin preparing for conflict instead of solving problems. Important topics now carry fear.

Trust decreases. Conflict is normal. Fear is the warning sign.

SECTION 9 / OUTCOME

Stuck pattern

No shouting. No solving. The issue returns again and again. Distance grows quietly.

Silence protects the moment, not the relationship.

CONTINUE TO SECTION 10 / PAGE 6

Reflection

Circle any that feel true. You may restart the story and choose a different path.

- ◯ My first response felt natural
- ◯ The outcome surprised me
- ◯ I avoid difficult conversations
- ◯ I react quickly when stressed
- ◯ I need time before talking
- ◯ I try to fix things immediately

One small change I want to try next time

RESTART THE STORY / SECTION 1 / PAGE 2

Images are AI-generated and do not depict HLH participants.