

# The Passive Aggressive In Couples Therapy

## Characteristics:

### **The essential feature is resistance.**

Procrastination  
Stubbornness  
Inefficiency  
Forgetfulness  
Fault-finding pessimism  
Irritable moodiness to even straightforward requests for adequate performance in occupational/social functioning

## Relationship Features:

### **Resistance, usually expressed through behavior**

To the therapist  
To the spouse  
To themselves  
To actual or perceived demands  
To reasonable requests for involvement in management of household chores and parenting

### **How they drive their partners crazy**

It's never the right time  
You're not bringing it up correctly  
Forgetting agreements  
Breaking agreements  
See partner as crazy for expecting accountability  
Seem reasonable in their verbal communication while their behavior is aggressive

## Couples Therapy Issues:

### **Problematic behavior in couples therapy**

Don't want to be there  
Are unclear what they want  
Don't believe in therapy  
Are critical of partner and noninvolved in therapy  
Seem confused and provocative at the same time  
Will be noncompliant

### **Interventions with the Partner of the Passive Aggressive**

Work with spouse early  
Validate that spouse isn't crazy  
Maintain thinking  
Goal is to stop kicking and being critical  
Identify own limits  
Stop doing things for other you will later regret

### **Interventions with the Passive Aggressive:**

Set self-motivated goals  
Name the problem  
Circular causality  
Identify the anger and inability to want directly  
Focus on refusal to be self-defining

