

# EAP Matters

## September 2016



**Football season has arrived** and, in many households, this is a source of contention in relationships. Living with an avid sports fan is not always easy. Sports fans are not only males but often the female in the relationship. Many partners feel their relationship is put on the sidelines during sports season. The following are some tips to help navigate the emotional triangle consisting of you, your partner, and your partner's team.

### 1. **Join in the fun.**

The easiest way to reconcile this problem is to join in the fun. All you have to do is learn the basics of the game your partner likes. Go online or get a book and learn the rules of the game and then start reading the paper, websites, or fan blogs to be informed.

If you have tried doing this and just have no interest in the game, then there are things that go along with the sport that you could enjoy. The social experience of being at a game and watching with other people can be enjoyable. There is an element of suspense to almost all games as well as emotions such as hope (when rooting for the underdog), joy (when your team wins), and humor (as long as it's not at your team's expense).

### 2. **Get a hobby that occupies you during the game.**

Try as you might, you may not be able to get into being a sports fan. Finding some hobby you can do while watching the game may be an alternative. Find something to do that you can learn easily, that will motivate you and keep your hands busy while you sit on the couch or in the stands.

### 3. **Understand the source of your partner's extreme fan behavior.**

There are many reasons why people love their sports teams. It may be that it was a family activity they grew up with or they grew up in a city where it was the primary claim to fame. It may be the sense of community that it has become for the person. These reasons have infiltrated your partner's sense of self and become more than just following a team. Once you realize this, you will be more patient with their devotion and understand more what makes them tick.

### 4. **Don't get jealous of your partner's devotion.**

Don't set up a scenario of "it is them or me". Look ahead for conflicts of time when you have other things planned for him/her to do and work it out ahead of time. The more you respect your partner's feelings about the game, the better the chances of coming to an agreeable resolution.

### 5. **Recognize the emotional downs.**

Fans go through emotional ups and downs. Give your partner the opportunity to rant and rave and realize they will bounce back from it. Don't use these down times as a time to try to talk them out of being a fan as it will probably backfire. Treat your partner with extra kindness at these times.

