


COVID-19: Communication in Family Life

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EFAP Information

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Objectives

During this one-hour wellness session you will:


- Discuss common issues related to family communication that may be heightened during the COVID-19 crisis
- Gain an overview of some effective strategies for improving communication in the family during this challenging time
- Develop self-expression and listening skills

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 **Agenda**

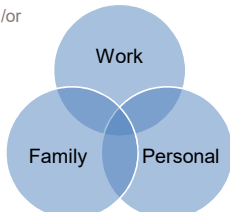
- COVID-19 and communication
- Discuss what constitutes healthy communication in families
- Assess common challenges in family communications
- Review the qualities and attributes of a good communicator

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 **COVID-19 and change**

CHANGE:


- Increased/decreased workload and/or new responsibilities
- Worry over the well-being of family and friends
- Social isolation
- School and childcare closures
- Financial hardship
- Job insecurity
- Shift to remote work



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 **Family communication and COVID-19**

- Accept that these circumstances are going to be incredibly challenging
- Communication is key
- Do your best best to cooperate, communicate and be kind to yourselves and others



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 **Healthy family communication**

Healthy family communication includes the ability to listen to one another as well as speak with each other in an honest and open way




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 **Discussion about common challenges**


What are some communication challenges that you are currently experiencing in your family?




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 **Communication barriers**

- Interrupting
- Assuming
- Competing distractions
- Advice giving
- Labelling
- Judging




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 **Doing away with communication barriers**

- Let go of analyzing or defining your partner
- Let go of interrogating questions that are attacks
- Accept your lack of control over the other person, choosing instead to see the other as his or her own person
- Learn to cherish the differences in others
- Make kindness to yourself and others your guiding light, even when your fears are triggered


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 **Listening is an art**

- Listen for the feelings behind the words
- Ask questions
- Demonstrate empathy
- Create a conducive environment



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 **Active listening skills**

Reflective Listening

- Pay attention!
- Don't think about your rebuttal or what you are going to say next
- Listen for feelings
- Show empathy


Do not twist the other persons words or try to turn words back on him/her in order to make a point.

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Active listening skills (Ctd)

Nonverbal communication

Pay attention to:	Tips:
- Body posture	- Look directly at the person to convey interest
- Touch	- Lean slightly towards him/her
- Gestures	- Use facial expressions consistent with your words
- Tone of voice	- Use firm tone: determination
- Voice pacing	- Use soft tone: warmth
	- Use eye contact
	- Nod



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Expressing yourself




- Define your intention and goal(s)
- Choose your environment
- Check emotional climate
- Plan your message


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Use "I" messages


- "I" language is the language of personal accountability
- Using it distinguishes your experience from another's
- Avoid "you", "we", "it" language (unless you mean it)




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 **Be aware of**


<p>Non-Verbal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Body language• Listening• Facial expression• Eye contact• Feelings	<p>Verbal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vocalizations• Vocabulary• Volume• Pace• Fluency• Intonation• Inflection
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 **Demonstrate understanding**

- Rephrase what the person has said
- Pay attention to feelings
- Ask appropriate questions



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 **Effective paraphrasing**

1. Statement of interest in understanding the other person
2. Identification of the other persons emotions or feelings using alternate words
3. Description of the situation, event or facts using alternate words

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 **Let's practice**


How do you listen actively?

- Summarize what the other says
- Acknowledge what the other says
- Acknowledge what the other feels
- Use his/her body language



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 **Pay attention to feelings**



Pay attention to **feelings** being expressed as well as words being spoken.

Ask **probing** questions such as:
You seem upset. What can I do to help?

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 **Ask questions**


Ask “closed” direct questions for information

- *Example: What time will you be home?*

Ask “open” questions to encourage deeper communication


- *Example: How do you feel...? How do you see it...?*

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 **Be respectful**

- You may not agree but you need to be willing to listen to what the other person believes
- Show your family members the same respect you would show a friend or a colleague
- Make sure you are walking your talk
- Don't yell at or criticize the other person


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 **Challenging relationships**


- Identify the "triggers"
- Manage your reactions!
- Think about what you can change
- Choose your response




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 **Be receptive to feedback**

- Calm down and think about it
- Ask for clarification, if necessary
- Either agree, and make appropriate amends, or correct the perception




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 **In summary...**

- The COVID-19 crisis will likely cause strain on family relationships.
- During these challenging times, it's important to focus on healthy family communication that includes the ability to listen to one another as well as speak with each other in an honest and open way.
- Do your best to cooperate, communicate and be kind to yourself and others!


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