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Aspirus Employee
Assistance Services
is confidential.



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Families
Talking
Together

There are special rewards for being part of a family. These include friendship, love and closeness, sharing, support and understanding, and acceptance of us just as we are. However, the needs of family members change constantly. Most changes are natural to growing older and wiser together.

Honest communication and careful listening can help assure that your family stays in tune, and that family members share love and support.

review your family patterns

Do you feel that you understand each other's needs? Do family conflicts reach a satisfactory end?

Here are three checkpoints:

- Is your approach positive, starting with how you feel? For example - "I feel important when you listen to me."
- Are you specific about the issue at hand? If you criticize, are you constructive? For example - "You didn't make your bed this morning. If you need more time, we can..."
- Can you negotiate? Even if you disagree on an issue, can you agree on a compromise? For example - "I don't agree, but I'll try for a week because I understand your reason."

are these problems familiar?

Outside friends, school or work activities and just plain fatigue can create problems.

Messages become unclear because it's easier to blame or bully than to take the time to discuss things. You may hold feelings back because you don't want to "start something."

As unresolved problems build, mutual respect can disappear. Finally, there just doesn't seem to be enough time or energy to pay attention to each other.

try these solutions

Here are standard guidelines for healthy communication:

- Be honest and share feelings.
- Listen and watch so you know when others are in need.
- Develop a manner of speech that is open and clear.
- Take responsibility for personal thoughts and actions.
- Regularly discuss values and beliefs.
- Encourage positive values and act as a role model.

create quality time

Your family may find that it's a lot easier to be patient with each other when all of you know what's going on.

Some families set aside an hour a week just to talk about individual and group needs.

Some working parents feel that the first five minutes after they get home is critical. Regardless of how tough a day has been, taking the time for an individual greeting says, "I recognize you."

family resources

Family counselors with Aspirus Employee Assistance Services can help when there's misunderstanding or lack of motivation to make things better. Each family member can learn to listen, to talk, to fight fair, to compromise and to cooperate.

help is available

Aspirus Employee Assistance Services has counselors available to help you and your family. You can call the confidential helpline 24 hours a day at:

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