



UNITED
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Wellness Monthly

Healthy matters to keep in mind.

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Home Sweet Home – Make Your Home a More Peaceful, Happy Place

The quality of your family life depends upon the quality of your relationships. Every family has problems, misunderstandings, and personality differences. Family dynamics are always complex. By following some simple strategies you can help your family communicate better, tackle problems as a team, and develop solutions that keep the peace.

To make a home environment that works, try a few simple changes.

Get the ball rolling.

The first step toward more harmonious relationships is to gather all family members and talk about your desire to improve your home environment. You set the example.

Let family members know that your goal is to make your home a better place. Share feelings and concerns as they arise. The work begins with you.

Control your anger.

When you're angry, stand up for yourself in a gentle, assertive way. Remember that you love the person, so don't say or do things that can cause lasting damage. Before facing a problem that may cause an angry response, remind yourself that you will control your anger. You may need to be alone for a few minutes before handling a tough situation. Take a few deep

breaths. Writing down your thoughts may help you figure out what to say and let you approach the situation more calmly.

Don't blame others.

Playing the victim is a passive way of placing blame on other people. Take responsibility for things within your control and express your feelings without placing blame. If you think others are at fault, use a creative, non-threatening approach to call attention to their actions. You might simply say, "For a moment, please put yourself in my position. How would it make you feel?"

Continued on [pg. 2](#) »

Tips for Bonding

Eat together. With everyone's busy schedules, it's often hard to share a daily meal. But the benefits of eating together can be great. Conversations during mealtime allow the family to connect, learn from each other, and process the day's events.

Play. Board games aren't only for kids! Organize a game night for the whole family. It requires a lot of work to be a happy family — don't forget that it can be fun, too.

Turn off the TV. All too often the television's constant noise replaces real conversation. When the television is off, family members are better able to share stories, play games, and focus on one another.

Upcoming Articles

February 2008

Turning Back the Clock – Tips for Keeping a Young Mind and Body

March 2008

Sleepless Nights – How They Affect Your Mood and Health

» Continued from pg. 1

Separate your feelings

from behaviors. Your feelings belong to you, and no one can argue with them. But from time to time, nearly everyone has feelings that lead to outbursts. If you're not happy with a family member, discuss the behaviors that you're unhappy with, and simply state how they make you feel.

Look for the solution.

The first step in approaching a family problem is to

believe that a solution can be found. After you've identified a problem, work together to develop two or three solutions and then talk about it. When the family believes that you're really committed to making things better, everyone will be more likely to cooperate.

Face serious problems.

If there are urgent problems in your home, face them now. Abuse of substances, or any type of abuse, should not be tolerated. There is

no way to have a happy home until you address serious problems that need professional help.

No matter what your family situation, you can start now to make your home a more peaceful place. You may need some support along the way. Asking for help is never a sign of weakness or failure, especially in situations too difficult to handle alone. UBH is here to help. Call or log on anytime for help with any of life's challenges.



Talking and Listening

The basis for a happy home is a family willing to talk and listen. Sounds easy enough, but we all know how hard it can be to communicate calmly and thoughtfully when you're upset.

Share your feelings in an assertive, loving way that doesn't place blame. When offering your point of view, avoid absolutes. Don't use words like "always" or "never," and try to use "I" statements. For example, replace "You never do the dishes" with "It's been awhile since you've



done the dishes, and I'm feeling overwhelmed with housework."

If you want to be heard, you also have to be a good listener. Make an effort to understand others' point of

view before sharing your feelings. Repeat others' key points. Ask for clarification when you don't understand something. When family members feel like you're listening to them, they'll be more likely to listen to you.

Resources

United Behavioral Health

Ask your HR representative for your access code and toll-free number.

www.liveandworkwell.com

Use the search phrase "parenting resource center" to learn more about family communication, managing conflicts, and dealing with discipline.

Use the search phrase "shared family meals" for more on the numerous benefits of eating together — and tips for making it happen.