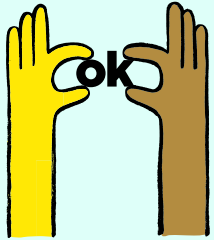


# Tips for Healthy Communication



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOU AND MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF. WHETHER IT'S A RELATIONSHIP WITH A PARENT OR CAREGIVER, A CLOSE FRIEND OR A PARTNER, OUR RELATIONSHIPS ALL DEPEND ON OUR ABILITY TO CLEARLY COMMUNICATE OUR NEEDS AND FEELINGS TO EACH OTHER. WHILE THAT MAY SEEM SIMPLE ENOUGH, COMMUNICATION CAN BE OVERWHELMING OR CHALLENGING AT TIMES IF WE CAN'T FIND THE RIGHT WORDS TO EXPRESS HOW WE ARE FEELING. REMEMBER, NOBODY IS A MIND READER.

Start by thinking about your own communication patterns and to identify the areas where we can improve.

Practise observing without evaluating. Healthy communication begins with healthy listening.

Identify and express your feelings. Whenever you notice a shift in your mood, try to identify what you feel and need in that moment—naming your emotion is a great place to start.

Listen empathically. People are generally more willing to hear you once they feel heard and understood.

## Discussion Questions

**1.** Consider a time recently when you felt as though your needs were not met. How did you react? If you were to experience this moment again, how would you react differently to clearly communicate your needs? Share this experience as a family and notice how reflecting on this moment challenges you to rethink your communication strategies.

**2.** In your own words, what does positive communication look and sound like to you? What does negative communication look and sound like to you? (For example, body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, etc.)

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# Take Action

**1.** Sometimes it's hard to find the right words to communicate our own feelings and emotions. If you're at a loss for words, consider asking your friend, family member or loved one for a five-minute break. This time will allow you to think about how you're feeling so you can go back to the conversation with a new outlook.

**2.** Consider keeping a journal or a note on your phone and write down any feelings or emotions that you wish to share with a close friend or loved one. When we write our feelings down ahead of time it gives us a chance to reflect on our needs while promoting a greater sense of self-awareness.

**3.** If you notice a shift in your mood for the worse, try to identify what you feel in that moment and if they are connected to issues in your relationships with family or a close friend. Find an appropriate way to clearly express what you need.

