

Teen Talk



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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE BOSTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL LEAGUE'S RESOURCE CENTER

Handling Conflicts Effectively — By Katlyn

When a conflict arises, whether it is between friends or between you and someone who is responsible for you, it is never easy to deal with. The truth is there is no set way to approach every situation that is going to work every time because every situation is different. There are, however tips to help you when approaching a difficult situation that could become confrontational. Here is a list of points to keep in mind:

1. Respect.

This is perhaps the most important thing on this list. People easily get caught up in the heat of the moment and forget that they are speaking to another person that deserves respect. This can cause them to say things they don't necessarily mean out of anger. It is important that you state your side of the issue in a way that allows you to be clear but most importantly, respectful.

2. Consider the other person's point of view.

As the saying goes, there are three sides to every story; your side, their side, and the truth. Sometimes it's easier to take a step back and try to understand where the other person is coming from. This is not only helpful to them, but also to you as you can strengthen your side by anticipating how they may respond to certain things. Being open to compromise can help because it prevents issues from resurfacing by allowing both sides to feel that they didn't yield more than they gained.

3. Make sure you can explain your point of view clearly.

Miscommunication can be the root of all evil in an argument and can even cause the conflict to become bigger. There is no way to fix a problem if you are not clear on what the problem is.

4. Make sure it's the right place and time

There is a time and place for everything in life and determining this can be difficult. Try to choose a time when you can both talk calmly and there are no other distractions that may prevent you from reaching a solution

5. Control and Communicate emotions

It's easy to let your emotions take control but when you allow this, you may feel vulnerable and that can cause you to say things you don't necessarily mean in the heat of the moment. It is important to express how you feel but its best to do so calmly.

6. Avoid direct blame

When you are being blamed for something, your natural instinct is to defend yourself. That's why in an argument, you should avoid blaming others, and focus the conversation more on expressing how you feel. For example, instead of saying "You hurt me" try saying "I feel hurt." This expresses the same idea, but in a more effective way.

7. Believe in your relationship

Believe your relationship with the person you are having a disagreement with is strong and important enough to work through your differences. There is no problem that is bigger than any relationship worth having in your life.

The reality of life is that you are going to run into problems with others, it's a part of human nature. With experience, you will learn how to resolve those differences in a respectful and effective way. The ultimate goal is to solve the problem and these are just a few universal tips to help.



Boston Children's Hospital
Center for Young Women's Health

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How do I help a friend who is self-harming?

— By Astrid

I have three close friends that I hang out with every single day. I don't consider them my friends anymore, they are more like sisters. We do everything together. There is never a day that we are not hanging out.

The day I found out that one of my friends was self-harming I couldn't believe it. I was in shock but mostly I was angry. How did I not know that one of my best friends was hurting herself on purpose? I couldn't understand why as she was known for always being happy and energetic. All I could ask myself was "How do I help her? The first thing she said to me when I found out was not to tell anyone or she would never talk to me again. I didn't want to lose my best friend but what was worse, losing her over telling someone or losing her because I didn't tell anyone? I did what was best and told a teacher at school. I don't regret telling my teacher because I knew that I had just saved her life.

Finding out that a friend, or family member is self-harming can not only be shocking but confusing and upsetting too. But it's important to understand that most people who self-harm are not doing it to get attention. In fact, they usually try to keep their behavior a secret and feel ashamed if someone finds out. A person who self-harms may say that their behavior (for example, cutting) is a way they cope with intense feelings that are associated with emotionally painful events.

Self-harming is a serious problem. People who self-harm can't just stop. They need help and a lot of support. If you suspect that someone is hurting themselves, tell them you are concerned and you are there for them. Tell them they need to talk to a trusted adult. If they don't follow-through, it may be up to you to tell someone such as their parent(s), guardian, teacher or guidance counselor.



- Do not be judgmental
- Be understanding, compassionate, and respectful
- Ask your friend or family member how they are feeling
- Be a good listener
- Encourage your friend or family member to get help
- Suggest that your friend write in a journal, do a craft, listen to music, etc. instead of self-harming
- Understand that recovery is a long process but your friend/family member will get better with time and a lot of support

If you know anyone who is self-harming don't be afraid to speak up. Even if your friend or family member stops talking to you, they'll eventually come around. It's more important to get them the help they need.

Owning Your Mistakes

— By Monica

Everyone makes mistakes. However owning up to those mistakes may be more difficult for some people. It may seem easier to dismiss your behavior instead of confronting the truth and owning up to your mistakes. Avoiding reality may put a strain on your relationship with someone and it may be the cause of unnecessary stress and concern. So when is it the right time to admit that you're wrong and what are the benefits to doing so?

Growing up, my mother and I would constantly argue with each other. During one of our arguments, I said some hurtful things which ended up offending my mother. After a couple of days, I noticed that my mom was not her usual bubbly-self and I realized that our argument had hurt her, yet I did not want to admit that I made a mistake. I thought it would be like another one of our arguments that we forgot about after a couple of days. However this one was different. My mother and I barely spoke for a couple of days, and I realized it was time to admit that I was wrong. I could not take the awkward silence in the car or during dinner anymore, so I decided to apologize. I told my mom that I realized that the things I said hurt her and that I was sorry. That was one of the first times I apologized to my mom and even though it was difficult to build up the courage to do so, it was worth it. After the first apology, I realized that it's ok to own up to something I did wrong. Not only did my mom and I feel better after I apologized, but it also made it easier for me to understand and admit to future mistakes.

Some believe that admitting you're wrong is a sign of weakness. Contrary to that belief, I think that owning your mistakes shows that you are strong enough to confront reality regardless of the consequences. Not acknowledging your mistakes means that you are either internally or externally blaming another person. Blaming someone who is not at fault can damage the relationship you have with that person. Therefore it's important to apologize when you have done something wrong. By doing so, you can move on and learn from your mistake.

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