

Handling Holiday Family Conflicts

Many of us love family time during the holidays. It is time to visit, take care of family matters and just enjoy time together. Families that spend pleasant, quality time together find it easier to resolve problems and conflicts. Conflicts in all areas of life are unavoidable, and families aren't exempt.

Here are 10 tips to help you handle family conflict:

1. Don't fight to win-there are no winners when you do. Your goal in a conflict is to solve the problem, not to win. Be willing to negotiate or give in when necessary.
2. Listen carefully to what the other person has to say. Everyone has a point of view and should have the chance to talk about it.
3. Be sure you understand exactly what the problem is. If you are not sure why you are having a conflict, by all means discuss it.
4. Take care of a problem as soon as it comes up, and before it is too big to handle. Even if the problem seems small, it will only get bigger if you don't deal with it.
5. Talk about only one conflict at a time. Avoid bringing up other items and old problems.
6. Don't blame others for problems you are having with someone else. For example, if you are upset with your sister, don't yell at your husband. You need to talk to your sister and tell her what's bothering you.
7. Think before you speak. If you say mean or hateful things to family or friends, you may be hurting them-even if you were only teasing. Phrase your thoughts in a productive way so they help and not hurt.
8. Never hit another person to get your way. Physical violence or abuse such as hitting, punching, kicking or slapping is never acceptable.
9. You may want to try writing down your feelings. If the person you are having the conflict with won't discuss the problem or if you are not comfortable talking about it-write a letter. You can decide later whether you want to mail or give it to the person.
10. When the conflict is over, drop it. Forgive and forget-don't keep bringing up the conflict or hold on to your anger once an argument is over. That is true even if the dispute wasn't resolved the way you wanted it to be.