



Managing Family Relationships During Isolation

Social distancing can be both challenging and positive for family units. Living in close confines during unprecedented times can naturally cause added stress and conflict between families.

The following tips can help you maintain your family relationships during this time and manage any conflicts that may arise as a result of this new situation.

Expect

Expect the added stress this unfamiliar situation will bring and reflect on how you can best react to this stress.

- How does your family unit usually react to stressful situations?
- Common responses include feelings of anxiety, fear, stress, helplessness and uncertainty.
- These natural responses can often prevent us from thinking and acting appropriately in stressful situations.
- It is important to acknowledge our feelings and manage them effectively so we can take calm and effective action in the midst of this global crisis.

Identify

Identify the feelings and thoughts you are experiencing. Monitor signs of stress and behaviour change in your family members.

- Addressing physical signs of anxiety and taking control of your thoughts, strongly affects how you think and act in stressful situations.
- This can influence those around you.
- Be aware of mindful of the needs of others around you.
- We all experience anxiety in a variety of different ways. What your response looks like may differ to the response of your family members.
- Try to identify any frightening and negative thoughts you or your family members might have. Evaluate these thoughts: do those thoughts help or hinder?

Manage

Manage your thoughts and feelings effectively with tips and strategies.

- Collaboratively engage in activities you all enjoy.
- Embrace the change of pace with gratitude.
- Encourage the productive sharing of feelings. Allocate dedicated time each week to facilitate this.



- Ensure to also allocate alone time. Families thrive when there is a healthy balance of together and apart.
- Communicate openly with your family about how you are feeling without casting blame.
- Stick to a daily routine. This helps all family members to set daily expectations of healthy eating, physical activity, good sleep, play and quiet time.
- Humour is a great tension release. Try telling jokes, watching something funny, playing silly games.
- Incorporate new coping strategies into your self-care routine. These may include deep, relaxed breathing or mindfulness. Use a smart phone app such as Smiling Mind to help get you started.
- Focus on things that are in our control rather than frightening thoughts.
- Stay virtually connected with others outside of your home during social distancing. This is important for all members of the family, including children. Physical distancing does not mean social disconnection.
- Try to enjoy the closeness. It is a great opportunity for families to reconnect with each other.

Acknowledge

Acknowledge, we are in extraordinary times in this worldwide pandemic.

We are spending endless days in constant contact with our family members. It is natural for tensions to rise and feelings of anxiety and irritability to ensue. During this time, help-seeking may be inhibited or feel overwhelming for some.

Support is Available

If you notice these tensions in your household, it is essential to address this early to prevent conflict arising. Collaborate and make this time together as comfortable as possible. Support and listen to one another as best you can. Your mental health has never mattered more, and our experienced clinicians are available to support you.

**Acacia EAP offers support 24/7/365
1300 364 273**