

# How We Communicate

Use this worksheet to explore how you communicate with a member of your family.

Family Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate how well you and this person communicate (1 - 10)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Why did you choose this number? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What usually leads to an argument with this person? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is something this person does that makes it hard to communicate with them?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you wish they would do differently in how they communicate with you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can you say to get them to start communicating differently with you?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you think *you* need to do differently to improve communication?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# I CAN PRACTICE I MESSAGES

**I feel** \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling word)  
**When you** \_\_\_\_\_ (person's action)  
**And I want** \_\_\_\_\_ (what will help you feel better)

**I feel** \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling word)  
**When you** \_\_\_\_\_ (person's action)  
**And I want** \_\_\_\_\_ (what will help you feel better)

**I feel** \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling word)  
**When you** \_\_\_\_\_ (person's action)  
**And I want** \_\_\_\_\_ (what will help you feel better)

**I feel** \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling word)  
**When you** \_\_\_\_\_ (person's action)  
**And I want** \_\_\_\_\_ (what will help you feel better)

# Family Questions

## Instructor's Sheet

### Instructions for the Activity Leader

1. Provide each family member with their own answer sheet. If there are more than four participants, give multiple copies to each person.
2. Ask each question out loud, in order, for everyone to answer.
3. Next, encourage each family member to share the answers they wrote for themselves. Compare their answers with the family's guesses.
4. Use the sharing portion of the activity as an opportunity for exploration and discussion. Take note when answers are very similar or very different. For example, similar answers might hint at shared values or goals, which may be beneficial in treatment.

### Instructions for Family Members:

1. Write each of your family member's names on the answer sheet, above the columns.
2. When asked a question, write your own answer, as well as your best guess for each family member's answer.

### Activity Questions

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1. What is everyone's favorite movie or television series?
2. Who is a morning or night person?
3. Who is messy and who is neat?
4. What is everyone's talent?
5. What is everyone's proudest moment?
6. What is everyone's life goal?
7. What is everyone's greatest fear?
8. Pick one or more role for each person: Fixer, Nurturer, Talker, and the Quiet One
9. Pick one or more future for each person: World Traveler, Family-Centered, Most Successful, or Thrill Seeker
10. What is a feeling that each person may be holding back from sharing?
11. How can you tell when each person is experiencing difficult feelings?
12. Who does each person go to when they are upset?

# Family Questions

## Answer Sheet

My Answers \_\_\_\_\_

1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

# My Changing Family

## Sentence Completion



My family is different now, because... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



When I think about my family, I feel... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Things I don't like about the changes to my family are... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Things I **do** like about the changes to my family are... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



My biggest worry about my family is... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



My hope for my family is... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# My Family Member

Use this worksheet to share all about a family member!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

3 words I would use to describe this person:

\_\_\_\_\_

I would rate our relationship (1-10):

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

What I like most about our relationship is:

\_\_\_\_\_

One way that we can improve our relationship:

\_\_\_\_\_

My favorite memory with this person is:

\_\_\_\_\_

When I'm around this person, I feel:

\_\_\_\_\_

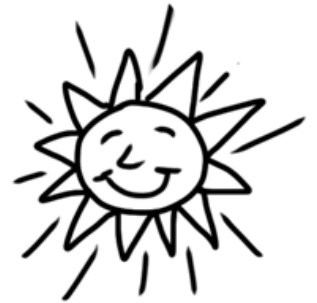


Behavior I  
Need to  
Work on  
at Home



Why I Need to  
Work on This  
Behavior

2 Things I Can  
Do to Improve  
This Behavior



# Relationship Conflict Resolution

## **Focus on the problem, not the person.**

When a disagreement turns to personal insults, raised voices, or mocking tones, the conversation is no longer productive. Be careful to focus on the problem without placing blame on your partner. If a disagreement because personal, you should pause the conversation.

## **Use reflective listening.**

Oftentimes during arguments we focus on getting our own point across rather than listening to our partner. Before responding to your partner, restate what they have said to you in your own words. Continue this process until your partner agrees that you understand. Next, share your side. Your partner should reflect back your ideas in their own words until they too understand. Using this technique will help both individuals feel listened to and understood, even if you disagree.

## **Use “I” statements.**

When sharing a concern, begin your sentence with “I”. For example: “I feel hurt when you don’t tell me you’ll be late”. With this sentence format we show that we are taking responsibility for our own emotion rather than blaming our partner. The alternative sentence—“You never tell me when you’re going to be late”—will often cause a partner to become defensive.

## **Know when to take a time-out.**

When you and your partner are becoming argumentative, insulting, or aggressive, it’s a good idea to take a time-out. Have a plan in place so you or your partner can call for a break when needed. Spend some time doing something alone that you find relaxing. When you’ve both calmed down, you and your partner can return to solving the problem. Be sure that you do return—it isn’t a good idea to leave these issues unaddressed.

## **Work toward a resolution.**

Disagreement is a normal part of a relationship. If it becomes clear that you and your partner will not agree, focus on a resolution instead. Try to find a compromise that benefits both individuals. Ask yourself if this disagreement really matters to your relationship, and let yourself move on if not.



# Our Family

## Values:

Important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a family about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. Values have major influence on a person's behavior and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations.

List three values that are important in your family:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Rules:

Family rules form a non-negotiable code of conduct to which all members must adhere. Rules should be simple and universal. Breaking a rule leads to a pre-determined consequence.

List three rules you think should be enforced in your family.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Consequence: \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Consequence: \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Consequence: \_\_\_\_\_

# In My Family

Circle or highlight the qualities that are in your family!

PEACE

FIGHTING

NAME CALLING

RESPECT

TIME SPENT TOGETHER

MANIPULATION

TRUST



LOVE

LAUGHTER

PRIVACY

LOYALTY

CONVERSATIONS

FUN

AGGRESSION

KINDNESS



APPRECIATION



POSITIVE FEEDBACK

GUILT

HAPPINESS

HATE

FAIRNESS

CONFLICT

HUMOR

LISTENING

CRITICISM

PLAY

POOR COMMUNICATION



CARE

SECRETS

CLOSENESS



TRADITIONS

FEAR

OPENNESS

UNFAIRNESS

SAFETY

ENCOURAGEMENT

DISHONESTY

EMPATHY



SUPPORT

HONESTY

Which of these traits do you wish your family had?



# Improving Communication with Family Members

## Objective

To increase open and respectful communication in your family.

## What to Know

Sometimes families experience a communication breakdown and family members feel misunderstood, angry, and alone. Do you ever feel this way?

The goal of communication should be that family members feel safe to express their thoughts. They feel listened to and understood. Family members feel that they can express themselves without criticism and no matter what they say, they will feel loved and respected.

If you feel like your family needs help in communicating in ways that support each other, this worksheet can help.

## What to Do

First, answer the following questions about communication in your family.

On a scale from 1-10, where 1 = the worst, and 10 = the best, rate how well you think your family communicates: \_\_\_\_\_

What topics are harder to talk about than others? Be specific.

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Is there anything people do that get in the way of communication (e.g., family members are late or don't show up when they say they will, family members look at their phone when others are talking, etc.).

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When certain topics come up, do family members get angry, interrupt, shut down, or otherwise become upset? Describe what happens.

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# Detective

## CHECKING FACTS

Step 1: What was the bad feeling? \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: What are 3 things I saw around me (ex. food on the table, tv on)?

1.

2.

3.

Step 3: What were other people doing?

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Step 4: Did my brain think there was a BIG problem? Yes No

Step 5: In my head, what was the DANGER? \_\_\_\_\_

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Step 6: Did that come true? Yes No

Step 7: If not, what did actually happen? \_\_\_\_\_

Step 8: What was something in the room that could have helped me calm down?

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Step 9: What is a calm thought about this problem I can say next time?

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Step 10: Now, what is my Mood 0-10 (0=awful 10=great): \_\_\_\_\_