

Building stronger families

TIP SHEET

Relationships Australia WA's education team have developed a range of tips to help support you during difficult times. As a free resource, we encourage you to share this with your community.

As a result of multiple social and cultural changes there are now many single-parent families, stepfamilies, same-sex couples, foster families and adoptive families raising children. Families of all kinds may be experiencing difficulties due to the pace of modern life, but strong families make for healthier communities. Families must take the time to develop skills to maintain and strengthen their relationships so that society as a whole can thrive.

Here are some suggestions to help you and your family build and maintain stronger connections:

For Parents

1. Be a leader

You can do this by making rules. Include your child in making rules when appropriate, ensuring that they reflect your values. Rules should be specific and easily understood. Stick together as parents and support your joint decisions, ensuring that you incorporate rewards and consequences into the raising of your children. Doing this will foster feelings of safety in your children.

2. Be a role model

Children learn by watching and imitating. It is therefore important to show them through your actions and words the preferred ways of behaviour. Take time to encourage each child, listen and talk to them. Tell each one what you appreciate about them.

3. Expect change

Families should expect change. It is the mark of all healthy families. It is normal to experience resistance and it is recommended that families take one step at a time. Draw on outside help when necessary.

4. Learn to recognise problems within the family

Having a problem you don't know how to solve creates stress, and this is the signal that something new is needed. Ask for help within the family and encourage each other to speak about difficult issues. Talking helps clarify problems, however family members must listen carefully to each other, acknowledging all feelings, thoughts and fears.

5. Commit to solving problems

Tackle one problem at a time and involve everyone that is affected. Make a plan - state the problem, write the result you want and list all possible solutions to get the result. Decide together on the solutions to implement. Finally carry out the plan. Make sure to re-evaluate to check if the plan is working and get outside help if the problem continues.

For Children

1. Develop your abilities

When you are good at something it will help you feel and be successful. Choose something to get good at and plan time to work on it. Ask for help from your parents if you need it. Learn to speak up respectfully, to listen carefully and negotiate with those around you. Being able to cooperate with others is an important skill to learn.

2. Grow your sense of belonging

Everyone has something to contribute. Keep in mind that this is your family too, so always try to put something into the “box” to enhance family life. A smile, a kind word to family members and helping around the house are all good examples of valuable contributions. Strive to follow rules at home, at school and within the community. This will contribute to your overall confidence and serve to enhance your feelings of belonging.

As we journey through these challenging times, please reach out for support and connection amongst your community or if you'd like further support from Relationships Australia WA you can call us on 1300 364 277.

Our Education team are continuing to facilitate Relationship Australia WA's seminars, workshops and courses face-to-face and online.

If you'd like to register your interest in attending a course on **Building Stronger Families** or any of our other courses, please email education@relationshipsqa.org.au or call 6164 0200.