

What to Do When You Don't Get Along with Your Family

Objective

To find resources to help you when you don't get along with people in your family, and to identify options that will be right for you as you move forward.

You Should Know

Many teens don't get along with members of their families. This can bring up a lot of emotions—anger, fear, frustration, sadness, guilt, shame, anxiety, depression. Sometimes it's hard to know what to do with those feelings and what to do to make things better. However, talking it out with a trusted adult can be a big help.

This worksheet is designed to help you identify people who can help you make decisions on how to resolve conflicts with your family in the most positive way possible. It's not easy, but it is important to find immediate as well as long-term solutions to this problem.

What to Do

Answer these questions as honestly as possible.

What is your current living situation? _____

Are you safe where you are living? _____

Who in your family are you experiencing conflicts with? _____

What is the nature of your conflict with those family members at the present time?

What have you already tried to resolve the conflict?

Has anything in particular helped? Not helped? Describe.

In what ways are you coping/not coping with the family stress right now?

Teens and parents often don't get along. Typical areas that teens and parents fight about include some of the following issues. Circle those topics you relate to the most.

- Independence
- Expectations
- Curfews
- Academic performance
- Choice of social activities
- Chores and responsibilities
- Appearance/Dress
- Parental behaviors (drinking, drugging, arguing)
- Control
- Rules
- Siblings
- Choice of friends
- Moodiness
- Sex
- Alcohol
- Drugs

Add more details about the items you circled:

In many families, communication has become too difficult to do on their own, especially if emotions are high and people feel overwhelmed. You might choose to reach out for help beyond your immediate family. You might talk to a counselor or trusted adult.

Below, list some people you can turn to when you need help sorting out your options.

Other family (relatives): _____

Family friends: _____

Neighbors: _____

Teachers: _____

Coaches: _____

Guidance counselors: _____

Other school staff: _____

Spiritual counselors: _____

Therapists/Counselors: _____

Peers/Friends: _____

Other: _____

Below, keep track of whom you contacted, when, and what the result was. Keep going, even if you get frustrated. Many families go through difficult periods and get through them eventually. Some families benefit from talking to a mental health professional along the way.

Date	Person Contacted	Outcome

Reflections on This Exercise

What was it like to reach out and ask for help? Reflect here on what helped.

What obstacles might still be in the way of taking action toward resolving your family difficulties?

What can you do for fun as you work through this? Think of ways to find balance in your life despite your current struggles (see a movie, hang out with a friend and watch TV).

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area?
