

Keeping Calm with Your Family

What to Know

Sometimes during conflict, you might feel anxious or stressed around family members. You might feel uncertain about how to react to certain conversations, pressures, struggles, or arguments. It's common to feel stress and anxiety when you're unsure how to deal with family members when you see things differently than they do. As a teen, you're forming your own opinions and views about what works for you. Family members might have different opinions, priorities, or viewpoints about school, your friends, and what you want to do at home.

Instead of blowing up or ignoring family members, you can use mindfulness to calm yourself down during times of conflict.

What to Do

When you're upset about things going on in your family, here is how you can calm yourself down.

1. Take some deep breaths, in and out. Relax your body and clear your mind.
2. Focus on your family's love for you. Reflect on ways they are concerned about you - even if you find their concern annoying.
3. Focus on your love for your family. Think about all the things you appreciate about them.
4. Breathe out any negative thoughts and feelings you have toward them for what they have done in the past, or what they are doing now that upsets you.
5. Take a deep breath in and again focus on how much they care about you. Slowly breathe out.

Repeat these steps in order five times.

Think about what it was like to slow down and let go of your negative reactions. What was it like for you?

Did you think about a particular family member during this exercise? Who? Why?

Were you more able to see things from your family member's point of view? Why or why not?

Can you see how understanding their point of view allows you to feel calmer and less anxious when you express yourself to them? Why or why not?

What are some ways that being less reactive during conflict with your family might result in you having less intense and fewer conflicts? How might this lower your stress in these situations? Explain.

Over the next month, use this technique when you feel anxious or stressed during conflicts with family members. Use the chart to write down the date, what happened, with whom, whether you used the technique to calm yourself down, and how you felt after.

Date	What happened?	With whom?	Use the technique? Y / N	How you felt after

Was this activity hard or easy? Why?

Did this activity help you calm down during family conflict? Why or why not?
