



Managing Conflict at Home



Conflicts are a part of life. However, being exposed to frequent or unresolved conflicts at home can increase your child's risk of developing mental health concerns.



Creating a safe and supportive family environment is not about avoiding all conflicts, but learning how to manage conflicts well.

- After everyone has calmed down from a family conflict, let your child know that it is okay for family members to disagree with each other or to make mistakes.
- Establish ground rules to help your child manage conflict well. Useful rules include avoiding personal attacks and hurtful statements, agreeing on a time-out to calm down when tensions are high and taking responsibility for your own mistakes.
- Have the courage to apologise and work towards a resolution if the conflict was caused by you. It does not show weakness as a parent. Instead, you will be role modelling the behaviour you wish to see in your child.

Tips

Managing Conflict with Your Spouse

- 1 Focus on actions and behaviours (e.g. "I feel angry when you do/say..."), rather than making comments about your spouse as a person (e.g. "You always make me angry").
- 2 Work out differences between you and your spouse in private. Avoid making your child take sides or play the role of a messenger for either parent.
- 3 Discuss expectations for your child with your spouse and agree on your parenting approach.

Sample Conversations



1 I did not like how you bought Darren the toy car after I already told him no.

He kept asking me and he has been having such a hard time in school.



He needs to learn that he won't get his way all the time.

2 I agree. But does that mean we can't let him have what he wants once in a while?



3 He can have things he asks for once in a while, but we should agree on buying it for him first. We both agree that Darren needs to learn that he won't always get what he wants. How do you think we can help him learn that?



If a family member is violent towards other family members, seek immediate professional help. Call the **National Anti-Violence and Sexual Harassment Helpline (NAVH) at 1800-777-0000**,

or visit a nearby **Family Service Centre (FSC)** to speak to a family counsellor or social worker. Scan the following QR code to find the nearest FSC.





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Tips

Managing Sibling Conflict

- 1 Before conflicts occur, set family rules on how conflicts should be managed (e.g. going to another room to calm down when you feel angry).
- 2 Affirm your children when you notice them getting along with or helping each another.
- 3 When your children have calmed down, discuss the incident with them, including what they have learnt and how they can deal with conflict in future.
- 4 Encourage your children to spend quality time together (e.g. playing games, exercising together).



Sample Conversations



Beth is being stupid again. She keeps blocking the TV.

Ayden, YOU are stupid!
<runs towards Ayden>



1 Ayden, Beth, we agreed that in the family, we would not call each other names. You both need a time-out to calm down and reflect on how you behaved towards each other. Once you have both calmed down, we will talk about how we could have dealt with the situation differently.

<After Ayden and Beth have calmed down.>



You both did something wrong to each other. Beth, it was not right for you to block your brother from watching TV. Ayden, it was also not right for you to call your sister stupid. Let's apologise for the behaviour that has upset each other.

Ayden, I'm sorry for blocking the TV.



Beth, I'm sorry for calling you stupid. It was hurtful and I shouldn't have said that.



- 2 Thank you for apologising to each other.
- 3 It's important that we get along well and be kind to each other in our family.
- 4 Let's spend some quality time together. How about going to the park to cycle together?

