

# Dealing with Conflict in Your Personal and Work Life: Conflict with family

*How you handle conflict affects your relationships with others and your overall wellbeing. This series includes tips on how to handle conflict with friends, family, co-workers, and others.*

**This is the third in a six-part series of articles on dealing with conflict which starts with ["Understanding conflict."](#) Read the previous article, ["Handling and resolving conflict."](#)**

## Conflict with family

Conflicts with family members can heat up much faster than other kinds of conflicts because they involve stronger emotional ties and tend to take place at home instead of in public places that set limits on behavior. Here are some tips on handling family conflicts:

**Treat your family members with respect.** Avoid any type of behavior that fuels conflict, such as name-calling or storming out of the room.

**Choose your battles.** Focus on the issues that matter most and try to let the others go. If you don't, you may end up arguing continually about things that aren't really important. Ask yourself, "What's really important here?"

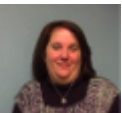
**Develop household rules for "fair fighting."** Work with your family to draw up a list of things that aren't acceptable when you disagree, such as no rehashing old history during a conflict you're currently trying to resolve, no storming out of the room during an argument, no name-calling, and no interrupting. If you argue frequently, post these rules in a place where everyone can see them.

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**Consider having family meetings to resolve some conflicts.** Some conflicts are easier to resolve if all of you sit down together and explore solutions. Family meetings can be an especially good way to resolve disagreements that affect everyone, such as who does what chores or how to cut back on expenses. It will help keep the conversation on track if you can agree on one person to facilitate the meeting.

**Call a "time out" if a disagreement gets out of control.** If an argument with a family member gets overheated, take a break to cool off. If you are arguing with your teenager, for example, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that you say, "This discussion isn't going anywhere. We need to stop, cool down, and come back to it later." This approach may be helpful with other relatives, too.

**This is the third in a six-part series of articles on dealing with conflict. Read the next in the series, ["Conflict with friends."](#)**



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