

# Wanting to be Heard in an Interpersonal Relationship

Children and adults often don't feel heard in a relationship.

With a few simple techniques and tips, it is possible to significantly improve our ability to process experiences, communicate our needs more effectively, and handle interpersonal conflict.

The following worksheet contains a list of practical tips for the parent to strengthen the relationship and reduce conflict through a focus on:

- Using good timing
- Making time for the other person
- Using *I feel* statements
- Doing your homework (prepare)
- Not giving up

Print out the sheet and find somewhere (perhaps in the bedroom) to display it to remind you what you can do to communicate more effectively (modified from Dietz, Weinberg & Mufson, 2018):

## Use good timing

- Make *appointments* with people you need to spend time with and talk to.
- Don't start important conversations when someone is annoyed, tired, or upset.
- Be patient. Hold on to questions until the person is calm and able to listen.

List examples of times that would be appropriate for important conversations.


### Make time for the other person

- How can we expect someone else to listen if we don't stop and listen to them?
- Recognize how the other person feels before presenting your request or feelings.
- Accept that a *no* is a *no*.

List examples of when you don't tend to listen and accept no as *no*.


### Use "I feel" statements

- Saying how you *feel* about a situation is less likely to cause an argument and more like to lead to a constructive conversation.
- Recognize that people cannot read your mind; you need to put your feelings into words.

List examples of *I feel* statements you could start to use.


### Do your homework

- Before you ask for something, be ready for compromise and come up with a few solutions that may work.
- Meeting in the middle can be acceptable for everyone.

When would compromise be appropriate in your life?

### Don't give up

- Accept that change can take time. You are finding new ways to solve problems and communicate better, except that this is a learning process.

How could finding better ways to communicate help you?

## Reference

- Dietz, L. J., Weinberg, R., & Mufson, L. (2018). *Family-based interpersonal psychotherapy for depressed preadolescents: Clinician guide*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Dr. Jeremy Sutton