



## Family Systems: When Conflict Arises



COVID-19 has set the stage in challenging people to build effective communication skills when faced with conflict, whether it is learning to say no to a social gathering or finding time for yourself. Tension and misunderstandings can mount in the home or with friends and finding time to focus on studies and stay motivated with distractions can be a challenge at

times.

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When conflict does arise, here are some tools to help you build better boundaries and communicate:

### **Reflecting creates understanding and prevents absorption**

When you practice reflecting what is being said by another person you not only clarify and develop an understanding, you also do not absorb the emotions that are being projected by the other person.

TIP: So, if tension arises, try taking a deep breath to clear your head and slow your thoughts. Too often when we are in conflict our breathing becomes shallow and increases blood pressure and our heart rate. Do not focus on the accusation, blaming, criticisms or demands. Listen and then reflect.

### **Avoid pitfalls like all-or-nothing thinking**

Try to see things from different perspectives. It is okay to disagree and validate your own opinion, but make sure you keep an open mind. Consider the middle ground.

## **Check your emotions**

How are you feeling? Angry? Helpless? Where are these feelings coming from? Are they your own or are they being projected onto you? If something being said is causing to feel a certain way, you have a choice to believe and become the emotion or take the power from the words and know it is not true.

*TIP: Try communicating using I-statements: “I feel.... when... because...” This allows you to own/identify your emotions and communicate you needs effectively without place blame.*

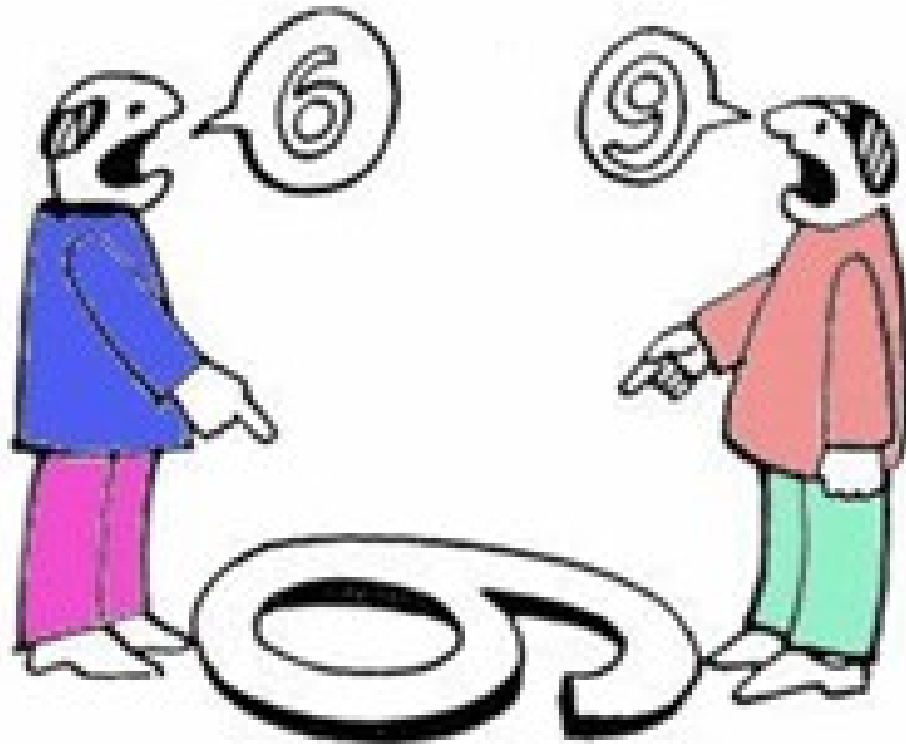
## **Validate the other’s emotions**

It is easy to be caught up in how you are feeling and discount another’s feelings. Do not try and judge, deny or justify their feelings. This is where reflecting comes in handy and demonstrates that you listening to what they have to say. Just be careful and make sure your tone of voice does not sound condescending or dismissive.

## **Consider your current environment**

Are you tired? Hungry? Experiencing multiple stressors? Feeling vulnerable or upset? If yes, then it would best to have the conversation at a different time.

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### ***But what if they just won't listen?***

It is important to understand that sometimes despite your best intentions, your words will not be well-received. This happens when the other person is not ready to listen and is often being fueled by their emotions. At this point, it would best to remove yourself from the conversation/situation.

If you're still having difficulties, you can always reach out to us in the CSWCS to help navigate this type of conversation.

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## ***Need to Talk?***

### **The Center for Student Wellness and Counseling Services**

Provides free and confidential direct individual counseling and psychiatric services for a variety of concerns including, stress, burnout, time management, relationship problems, anxiety, depression and other matters related to a student's overall mental well-being. We are committed to helping you connect to a variety of support options that will meet your particular needs.

We are located in Suite A-200 next to the library.

***330.325.6757***

***[counseling@neomed.edu](mailto:counseling@neomed.edu)***

***[www.neomed.edu/cswc/](http://www.neomed.edu/cswc/)***

**National and Local Crisis Resources**

**(Local) Coleman Professional  
Services 330.296.3555**

**National Suicide Hotline 800.273.8255**

**Crisis Text Line 741-741**

