

Tips for Improving Your Family Communication Skills

1. Use “I” statement rather than “you” statements. Start a sentence by expressing how you FEEL, instead of blaming or accusing another party.
2. Turn complaints into requests. Thinking before speaking allows us to convert most aversive complaints into a moderately reasonable request.
3. Stop the use of derogatory labels and profanity.
4. Make statement that express empathy, or provide new information; otherwise remain quiet! Avoid the need to “rub it in” or “drive home a point.” Excessive repetition is likely to be seen as an irritant, not as helpful.
5. Observe standard etiquette. Would an outside party see your family as being rude or inappropriate with each other?

See also:

Miklowitz, D. and Goldstein, M.J.. (1997). Bipolar Disorder: A family-focused treatment approach. New York: Guilford Press