

Card II: Communication

Introduction

To communicate can be both easy and difficult at the same time. In a family we interpret, feel and read each other all the time. Ideally, we learn to be responsive to each other.

With good communication you can create the possibility to support everyone's wellbeing. Simultaneously you also act as role-models to your children, setting an example how to communicate.

Aim of the meetup

To reflect on the ways we communicate and are communicated to.

Re-connect to last meetup:

What did you bring with you from the last meetup?

Is there something you would like to discuss further?

Types of messages

Verbal messages: conveyed through words.

Vocal messages: conveyed through voice. E.g. Intonation, articulation, force and speed of voice.

Bodily messages: conveyed through looks, eye contact, facial expression, pose, gestures, physical proximity, clothing and appearance.

Messages through touch: Subcategory of bodily messages. Sent through touch and gain different content through which body parts used to touch, which parts of the others body are touched, level of gentleness and consent.

Messages through action: Messages sent when the other is not directly present, through action. For instance, sending letters, e-mails, doing chores or paying bills.

Causal talk: practical talk, cause and effect

Conflict talk: When we can't agree on some things. There are conflicts that can be resolved and those which cannot be resolved. Choose your battles, what can be resolved?

Friend talk: Small talk. Supports and builds up your relationships in the family. Serves to confirm the appreciation for each other. Everyday politeness.

Warm up — End the sentence with the first thing that springs to mind

- When I'm stressed I communicate...
- What I find hardest with communication is...
- In my family we communicate in (in what way) ...

Discuss in the group or with your partner

Discussion 1:

Who do you feel gets most heard in your family?

Possible follow up

- *In which way would you like your partner to hear you?*
- *In which way would you like your partner to see you?*
- *Who is most talkative or silent in your family?*

Discussion 2:

Mirror emotions. How does the conversation between you and your partner look different when you make a proposition or ask? Compare "I claim you..." to "I wonder if.."

Possible follow up

- *Reflect what kind of message sentences like "You always do this..." or "you're always..." convey.*
- *Try talking from a first-person perspective, for instance "I feel like you are irritated, sad, disappointed..." etc.*

Discussion 3:

When your role in a conversation is to listen to your partner or child, for instance them talking about something that interest them, how do you listen? Is there a difference in listening to your partner or child? In what way?

Possible follow up:

- *What is your bodily message?*
- *Are you mentally present?*
- *How is your eye contact?*
- *What kind of expression do you have on your face?*
- *What is your personal space? (How do you sit, distance etc.)*

Homework:

Discuss how you need intimacy and when you need distance. Ask your partner the same questions

If there were to be an unresolved issue between you and your partner, who would be the first to apologize?

Questions with open answers: *How has your day been? What have you done today?*

Questions with closed (yes/no) answers: *Have you had a good day?*

To sum up

Is there something you still would like to reflect on and discuss further?