

Success Over Stress



Learn how to listen and learn how to say what you mean. It's the glue that can help you weather crises and other stress situations at home and at work.

How to listen

- Put aside what you are doing to show the speaker you intend to listen.
- Reserve your own opinions, thoughts, and conclusions until you've heard what the speaker is trying to say.
- Have an attitude of openness and respect for what your family member or coworker is saying. You may not agree, but being willing to hear what the other person says demonstrates your respect for that person.
- Listening is difficult when strong emotions are present. Just being with someone who is going through a hard time shows that you care. A gentle touch or hug can show support, when you don't know what to say.

How to express yourself

- Say what you mean in a simple, direct way. Be specific rather than general: "I had a discouraging talk with my boss today" rather than "Oh, I had a terrible day."
- Describe how other people's behavior affects you without blaming or evaluating: "I really need to talk to you" rather than "You don't ever listen to me."
- Don't avoid talking about something that is important to you because you are afraid of how the other person may respond. Be ready, in turn, to listen and try to understand the other person's reaction.
- Be aware of your nonverbal communication. If people know you, they will believe what your face, tone of voice, and posture say more quickly than your words.

Source: Maria Pippidis, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, Family and Consumer Sciences