

Advice In Improving Family Relationships During The “Stay-At-Home” Period

Alexandra Santana-Baesel, MS

April 1, 2020

The strategy is to “Stay-at-Home” for our safety and others. Illinois’ Stay-at-Home order extended through April 30 aims to stop the rapid spread of COVID-19, announced Gov. J.B. Pritzker on March 31. As a multicultural society we are part of the strategy to be safe, to be mindful to everyone in the household, and to be also aware of potential challenges over uncertain moments while living, working, and eating at home. For college students returning to family dynamics as well as for parents the coexistence can be tough during the “Stay-at-Home” period.

Families can cope with difficult situations in many ways:

1. Practice **mindfulness** in the home without forgetting that college students need both boundaries and autonomy. For example, parents can enjoy healthy relationships by being mindful, which includes considering how the students might feel when they are back home.
2. Think about **negotiation**, it can be an essential piece of healthy relationships. Remember when family members disagree, there are at least two different points of view, once you identify these different points of view you can negotiate. However, if all want to watch the same TV show, everyone agrees and is on the same page, then there is nothing to negotiate.
3. Make the development of **patience** to face difficult times a part of your list. For example, if you have a loved one suffering from an addiction, patience runs out. Therefore, developing patience can contribute to the recovery of the family member. Also, it is necessary to be informed, when a loved one suffers from an addiction, it may be relevant for other family members to learn more about the addiction in small steps. Consider that other family members may be emotionally affected.
4. Be **receptive**. Avoid assumptions, instead try to open up, communicate, and listen, allowing yourself a minute to think and reflect before jumping to conclusions.
5. Find ways to support the **integrity** of the family group, preventing confrontation with a difficult family member. For example: avoid political topics and respect different political views. Acknowledge that we all evolve in different ways!