



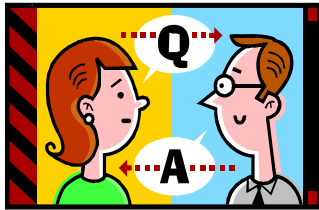
Family Life

Mary Hughes
Field Specialist/Family Life

Ways to “PeopleTALK” for Satisfying Family Relationships

“Meaningful relationships require continual attention,” says Charlotte Shoup Olsen, Ph.D., Kansas Extension Specialist in Family Systems. And, keeping a friendship going in a marriage or other couple relationship can sometimes be difficult. Personal relationships take hard work and nowhere is that more evident than in families.

Because the couple relationship has a profound impact on how children grow and develop, it makes sense that a disagreement that doesn’t get resolved can also impact a child’s development.



It isn’t that a family should be void of disagreement. That would be impossible! The

disagreement part is inevitable; it’s how we handle it that can be either helpful or detrimental.

So, having some basic tools for managing those times when serious disagreements arise that threaten the continuing couple relationship can strengthen the fabric of a family. In her fact sheet, “**PeopleTALK: Enhancing Your Relationships,**” Charlotte shares ten short tips for cooling family disagreements when they get too hot:

1. **Share everyday happenings.** Let your partner in on the little details of your day.
2. **Show fondness and admiration.** John Gottman, a researcher from the University of Washington who has studied couple relationships for many years, suggests good relationships are maintained when there are five positive interactions for every one negative interaction. (A 5:1 ratio is the magic score!)
3. **Bring up tough issues ‘softly’ at a time that makes sense rather than a time when the other person is busy.**
4. **Avoid using the word ‘You’ - Use ‘I’ statements.** Instead of “You never call me when your plans change;” say, “When plans change and I get no phone call, I feel worried

and unsure as to a good time to eat because I am not sure whether to hold supper until you’re home.”

5. **Be mutually respectful of yourself, the other person, and the situation, especially during a conflict.** Disagreements can be respectfully handled with the next three tips.
6. **Agree on rules for difficult discussions.** For example, agree not to bring up old topics of irritation. Stick *only* to the current disagreement.
7. **Suggest a “time-out” to cool down.** Ask for some ‘time away’ and agree when to re-meet when you both have re-established ‘your right mind!’
8. **Calm your body down in times of conflict.** Think of methods that work for you such as deep breathing, stretching, or a short brisk walk.
9. **Be willing to find a compromise in ways you can both accept.**
10. **Honor each other’s hopes and dreams.** Be interested in the other persons inner thoughts without prying for information.

Even long-standing couples find that new areas of disagreements arise, seemingly out of nowhere! All couples can make use of these ten tips whether the bond is new or already comfortable. You can read more about these ten tips as well as find additional information on enhancing couple relationships by going to

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/marriage/pages/re-sources>.

Iowa is one of several states across the country to air two Satellite programs – December 2nd and December 9th on the “Impact of Marital and Couple Relationships on Parenting and Child Outcomes.” Professionals working with families will learn about research highlights from recent studies on couple relationships, as well as take home some practical tips for improving their practice with families. To register for this important two-part series, please contact your local ISU Extension office or go to our home page at www.extension.iastate.edu and click on “Families” on the left side to find the link.



Resource Management

Mary Beth Kaufman

Field Specialist/Family Resource Management

Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

Medicare will soon offer coverage for prescription drugs through Medicare prescription drug plans. Insurance companies will work with Medicare to offer these plans. Anyone with Medicare Part A and/or Part B can join a Medicare prescription drug plan offered in their area between November 15, 2005, and May 15, 2006. If you are eligible to join and wait until after May 15, 2005, you are likely to pay a higher premium.

Like other insurance, you will pay a monthly premium (around \$37 in 2006) and a yearly deductible (up to \$250 in 2006). You will also pay a part of the cost of prescriptions, a co-payment, or co-insurance. If you don't use a lot of prescription drugs now, you should still consider joining. As we age, most people need prescription drugs to stay healthy.

To receive prescription coverage you must choose and enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan. Here is what you can do now.

- Look over your current health insurance coverage. Are prescription drugs covered? What are your out-of-pocket costs?
- Make a list of the name, dosage, and cost of the prescriptions you use. This will help you choose a plan that meets your prescription needs since different plans will cover different drugs.
- You may have received an application this summer to get extra help paying for a Medicare prescription drug plan if you have limited income. Fill it out and return it.
- Check with your benefits administrator if you have prescription drug coverage through a former employer or union. Medicare prescription drug coverage may be different for you.
- Watch for a 'Medicare and You- 2006' handbook in the mail this fall. It will have details of the drug plans in your area.
- Direct questions to Iowa's Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) at 1-800-351-4664 or Medicare at 1-800-633-4227. Or visit their websites at www.shiip.state.ia.us or www.medicare.gov

Be a Tax Volunteer

Do you like to help others? Do you have an interest in accounting or numbers? Then you may want to get involved in the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

VITA volunteers are provided free training, self study materials, and software to prepare basic income tax returns. In return for the training, volunteers will work at selected community sites in SW Iowa during tax season preparing tax returns for low to moderate income individuals and families. The IRS waives liability for VITA volunteers.

To find out more about the VITA program call 1-877-256-0801 or e-mail: mbkaufma@iastate.edu



Nutrition & Health

Pat Anderson

Field Specialist/Family Nutrition & Health

Overeating is a habit. --- Habits can be broken!

Carrying excess weight has many health implications. Excess weight is linked to a higher risk for many types of cancer, blood cholesterol levels, risk for diabetes, blood pressure values, and a greater number of foot and knee problems, just to name a few.

Yet, many of us have let the weight creep on and now we have a habit of overeating. One of the first steps in weight loss is to get a realistic picture of portion sizes in mind and gradually reduce our eating to more realistic portions. The secret to visualizing serving sizes is in your hand and many common objects.

Familiarity with common items can help you visualize serving sizes:

- 1/2 cup rice or pasta is a cupcake wrapper full
- 1 pancake is a compact CD
- 1 piece cornbread is a bar of soap
- 1/4 cup raisins is a large egg
- 1 muffin is a large egg
- 1 1/2 ounces natural cheese is a 9-volt battery
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter is a ping-pong ball
- 3 ounce fish fillet is a checkbook
- Computer mouse is 1/2 cup fruit or cooked pasta
- Slice of bread is a floppy disk

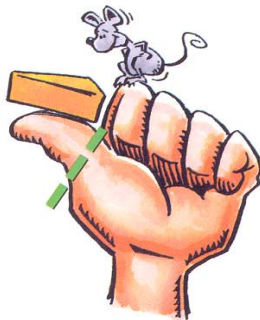
A fist or cupped hand = 1 cup



- 1 serving = 1/2 cup cereal, cooked pasta or rice
 or 1 cup of raw, leafy green vegetables
 or 1/2 cup of cooked or raw, chopped vegetables or fruit

A thumb = 1 oz. of cheese

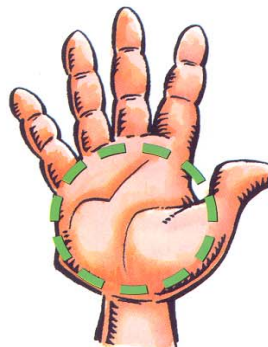
Consuming low-fat cheese is a good way to help you meet the required servings from the milk, yogurt and cheese group. 1 1/2 - 2 oz. of low-fat cheese counts as 1 of the 2-3 daily recommended servings.



Handful = 1-2 oz. of snack food



Snacking can add up. Remember, 1 handful equals 1 oz. of nuts and small candies. For chips and pretzels, 2 handfuls equals 1 oz.



Palm = 3 oz. of meat

Two servings, or 6 oz., of lean meat (poultry, fish, shellfish, beef) should be a part of a daily diet. Measure the right amount with your palm. One palm size portion equals 3 oz., or one serving.

Thumb tip = 1 teaspoon

Keep high-fat foods, such as peanut butter and mayonnaise, at a minimum by measuring the serving with your thumb. One teaspoon is equal to the end of your thumb, from the knuckle up. Three teaspoons equals 1 tablespoon.



1 tennis ball = 1 serving of fruit

Healthy diets include 2-4 servings of fruit a day.

Because hand sizes vary, compare your fist size to an actual measuring cup.