

# Family Connection

Webinar  
19 May 2021



## Overview of Session

- What is connection?
- Characteristics of healthy connections
- Why it is important to maintain connections
- Strategies to build and sustain connections
- Family Rituals

## What is Connection?

“I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.”

— **Brené Brown**

## Characteristics of healthy family connections

Healthy families display the following characteristics:

- **Honest, open and respectful communication** – ensure everyone within the family has an opportunity to express themselves, remember we all have different things going on for us, different opinions, beliefs and emotions, be sure to listen with empathy and without judgement. Encourage communication, especially around challenging conversations.
- **An acceptance of each other** – we are all different! Even if we have the same genes, our personalities, beliefs, values, opinions, likes, dislikes all vary. To accept someone means we accept all of them, and we appreciate the value they have to offer, even when they may seem so different to ourselves.
- **Appreciation of each other** – show the members of your family you appreciate them, thank them, say, or do something nice to show you care. Sometimes we think they ‘know’ we appreciate them (and they probably do) it doesn’t hurt to say or show it!
- **Ability to manage conflict positively** – by using honest, open communication, accepting, and appreciating each other, families are better able to work together cooperatively to solve conflict.
- **Commitment to each other and the family** – balancing all aspects of our lives is difficult, showing commitment to our family means we invest time and energy into them and hold them at the top of our priority list.
- **Family time** – spend time with the family, all together as well as one on one time with each other, including parent time! You could have a family fun day, set time during the week for each child, date night for parents.
- **Self-care** – it is important to look after yourself, so you can then be better able to support others. It is also beneficial to have family self-care strategies – for more information on self-care, join our Family self-care webinar tomorrow.



## Why is it important to maintain positive connections?

- It feels good to be part of a family that shows love, warmth, commitment, appreciation and support
- Children feel secured, providing a strong base, giving them confidence to explore and grow
- Families are better able to solve problems and manage conflict
- Provides children with the skills they need to build their own healthy relationships

(Positive relationships for families: how to build them, 2020)

## Strategies to build family connections

There are many ways to build family connections, remember we are all different.

So, what works for one family may not work for you. That's ok! Try some strategies and see how they go, if you like them continue, if not try something else.

Be courageous and try things outside your comfort zone, you never know, you may learn something new and connect as a family in a way you haven't before!

## Family connection ideas

There are many, many ways to build or sustain family connection, here are a few examples:

- **Really listen to each other** – don't just appear to be listening, make eye contact and other non-verbal cues to let them know you are interested in what they have to say
- **Laugh together** – there is always room for laughter, be silly, watch funny movies, make jokes, after all don't, they say laughter is the best medicine?
- **Manage your own and the family's commitments so there is time to rest together** – life is so fast paced, work, school, after school commitments, household chores, sometimes we need to say no to commitments to allow ourselves and our families time to relax, rest and rejuvenate.
- **Play** – as with laugh – have fun together, bring out your inner child and have fun! Go on a scavenger hunt, nature walk, play a game, sing karaoke.
- **Regular quality time** – one on one and as a family – quality time is important, not just for the family, but the parents, the parents with each child, the children with each other, this will help build and sustain connections within the family members, thereby helping the family connection as a whole.
- **Tech free time** – this could be a hard one! For parents and teens especially. Take a break from technology regularly – perhaps make it a guideline when spending time together, that there is limited or no technology allowed (unless you're playing video games as a family of course.)
- **Encouraging, empathetic environment** – build a family environment that encourages, empathy, understanding, trust, love, and support.
- **Involve the whole family** – encourage connections with extended family where possible
- **Share responsibilities** – work as a team – ask children to do age-appropriate chores, just as a family has fun together, they should also contribute to the household together.
- **Identify family values** – identifying family values has many benefits, it can bring the family together, supporting connections (refer to our Family Values webinar).
- **Pray together** – your family may find self-reflection and prayer beneficial to strengthening your connection, it can support us through both the good, and hard times we may face.
- **Family rituals** – we will explore this more next!  
(20 Ways Families Can Stay Connected, 2019)

## Family Rituals

Family rituals are those things that you do together as a family that hold a special meaning to you.

Family rituals could include:

- **Eating dinner together** – either every night or maybe a family dinner night each week
- **Family meeting** – each week you come together as a family to talk about your week, good news stories or challenges you may be facing
- **Turn daily routines into rituals** – have special names for each other, special greetings, or hand-shakes, say 'I love you' everyday
- **Family fun day** – dedicate one day to spend as a family – go on an adventure, rest at home. Make a list together of activities you could do on family fun day and take turns picking what you will do.
- **One on one time** – schedule time with each member of the family, it could be as simple as reading a book before bed, playing their favourite game
- **Special occasions** – many people have rituals for special occasions – when you put the Christmas tree up, birthday person chooses their favourite meal on their birthday.

(Family rituals: what are they?, 2020)

## References

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## Our Services.

CatholicCare is the social services agency of the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong, covering the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Macarthur and Southern Highlands Regions. We support people to establish and build positive

relationships and connected lives. Our aim is to help people through difficult times to help them achieve self-reliance and realise their full potential. We also advocate for social equality and prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable.

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