



A Full House

More and more households are spanning three or more generations as immediate and extended family members live under one roof. Sometimes this arrangement is by choice, sometimes by necessity, and sometimes both.

Perhaps your son, daughter-in-law, and grandchild are moving in to save for a down-payment on a house. Or your elderly parent is moving in for more intensive caregiving and support. While each family is unique, there are some universal tips that can help create a harmonious home. Consider the following:

What you can do

- **Understand needs.** Take some time to consider the family/home needs of everyone, including your own. It may be helpful to have some time to think and then write them down to share one-on-one or during a family dinner. When needs collide, such as your mother needing more time with your teenage son while he is needing more alone time, seek a compromise.
- **Share the load.** When one family member is taking on too many responsibilities at home, resentments can build. Discuss family and household expectations and responsibilities. Make sure everyone is included, understands, and is assigned an appropriate chore or task. Frequently revisit the distribution and rotate, or make changes where needed.
- **Create space.** As with household duties, the lack of personal space can also fuel resentment for family members who are adjusting to a more concentrated living situation. While you can't necessarily provide everyone with more space at the same time, you can try rotating space. For example, if the bathroom is often fought over, assign everyone to a time slot for showers/baths and try to stick to it.
- **Nurture change.** Think about how you want your home to be while identifying specific examples. Less yelling, more kind words? More fun time, less 'to dos'? Once you've defined a few examples, discuss different ways that you and your family can put them into action.
- **Plan for quality time.** When schedules become overwhelmed with things to do, family togetherness is often the first to be crossed off the list. However, spending quality time together is an integral part of maintaining a healthy and happy family as it nurtures family bonds, provides opportunities for deeper communication, and creates lasting memories.
- **Resolving differences.** When disagreements happen, try working through the following steps:
 1. Identify the problem and the needs of both/all family members.
 2. Brainstorm a list of possible solutions together.
 3. Evaluate the possible solutions and decide upon one.
 4. Take steps to implement the solution.
 5. Follow up on the solution, and make changes when necessary.

For more information about family relationships, contact your Employee Assistance Program via the website or toll free number listed below.



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