



# The *'perfect family'* doesn't exist.

A photograph showing a person from behind, wearing a blue sweater, holding a wooden-framed photograph of a family. The photo depicts a man, a woman, and a child. In the background, there are cardboard boxes and a yellow box, suggesting a moving or unpacking scene.

Some practical tips on managing family life and the importance of seeking help if you need it.

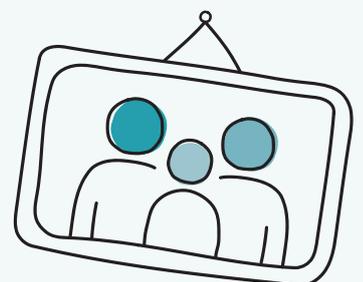
It's healthy to remind yourself that all families have their unique problems and that it's normal to feel overwhelmed sometimes - but most importantly, that help is there when you need it. No matter what you see on social media or on television, there is no such thing as a 'perfect' family.

## The right advice and support help

When you're in the thick of it, especially if you're caring for others, the frenetic schedule can feel like it's taking you over. So, it's important to take the time to reassess, look at what you can change and learn how to manage the things you can't.

Paying attention to your behaviours, making adjustments, and seeking professional support (like EAPs) can all make a big difference.

Of all the issues to focus on, effective communication is one of the most important. Without it, we can't express how we feel or fully understand how others are feeling.



## The power of effective communication

The basis of a healthy family dynamic is communication. Most of us assume we know how to communicate effectively, but there are some techniques to help improve family communication.



- Active listening - to help build trust, and to make sure the other person feels like they're being heard and understood, you can try paraphrasing what they say.



- Better body language - pay attention to how you're coming across to the other person - crossing arms, rolling eyes, frowning etc. can all impact how messaging is received and delivered.



- Switch 'you' for 'I' - sometimes called a 'soft start-up', this technique helps you avoid defensive reactions by describing how you feel, rather than placing blame. Swap 'you don't listen' for 'I feel like I'm not being heard' for example.



- Positive reinforcement - you can encourage improvement in specific behaviour through praise and/or rewards.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Stay positive and seek support when you need it.

Even when things aren't exactly going to plan, you can still find moments of joy. And it's important to cherish those moments and focus on the positive aspects of belonging to a family. And remember, you can always reach out for guidance and talk to professional clinicians through your EAP. Their expertise and guidance can be a valuable support.

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