

The Counseling Team International
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Helpful Hints for Families

1. How can a family determine whether his/her work is adversely affecting family life? While personal knowledge of the family life is, of course, the best indicator, there are certain signs of deteriorating family life that should be pointed out.

- ... Spending more time hanging out with the relatives
- ... Working more hours to avoid coming home
- ... Becoming more cynical, cold, distant, bitter, unfriendly, and aggressive toward family members
- ... Having less patience to deal with family problems
- ... Allowing the family to solve problems without your input
- ... Spending time alone or doing solitary activities when home
- ... Talking less to spouse
- ... Having the attitude that "I could care less" or "Don't bother me"
- ... Becoming more opinionated and rigid in your beliefs
- ... Becoming more restrictive with family
- ... Becoming more short-tempered and over-reacting more often
- ... Avoiding conflict situations and withdrawing
- ... Seeking more conflict situations
- ... Being less concerned about appearance
- ... Sleeping and eating less than usual
- ... Eating and drinking more than usual
- ... Becoming more depressed
- ... Having less energy
- ... Developing frequent illness
- ... Having less interest in work or home

2. If a family member recognizes that these problems exist either at work or at home, action is required to improve the situation. Discuss the following measures that can aid the family member in better controlling stress.

- ... Work off frustrations and tensions - physical exercise can serve as an effective release.
- ... Learn to accept what cannot be changed, and take control over those things that can be changed.
- ... Be physically and mentally fit. Get sufficient rest and maintain proper diet. Get periodic medical checkups.

- ... Balance work and play. Find time to develop some outside interests and hobbies. Incorporate a relaxation program as part of daily activities.
 - ... Discuss problems with others. If feelings cannot be shared with a spouse then find someone else to talk to - a counselor, clergyman, or physician. Don't be reluctant to seek professional help if necessary. Counselors will maintain confidentiality. Asking for help from *The Counseling Team International* does not affect employment or their family life.
3. Many families find that, as their careers progress, their circle of friends narrow to the exclusion of people outside their profession. To avoid such social isolation, the loved one can take certain steps to make new friendships.
- ... Seek people who have similar working hours.
 - ... Join community organizations and clubs, where you can find a variety of people your own age who have many interests, but whose common goal is helping others.
 - ... Seek out the parents of your children's friends. Since they are also raising children, they will probably share many of the same problems, fears, and worries you do. Help out when possible with youth organization such as little league, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.
 - ... Broaden your social circle by making new friends.

More Hints for Families

1. Schedule time together:
 - Administrative
 - Couple
 - Family
 - Children (with each one individually)
2. Work hard, play hard.
3. Have a life of your own:
 - Outside of the work environment
 - Hobbies, special interests
4. Include your spouse in collateral work activities, e.g. conferences, workshops, picnics, etc.
5. Have a "decompression" period when returning from work to home. This is a time for each spouse to "unwind" before discussing the family business of the day.
6. Share your reactions to upsetting incidents, personal and work related.
7. Listen carefully.
8. Establish an equitable division of household labor.
9. Display affection openly.
10. Develop a network of friends for companionship, support and fun: each individually and as a couple.