



## Coping with Holiday Stress

### A Note from the Director

We usually think of the holiday season as a fun, festive time of the year. Holiday parties and family gatherings are a wonderful time to connect or re-connect with family and friends. The reality is not all family members get along. Unfortunately, the well-intended act of attending these events anyway, "for the sake of the family" can backfire if you don't have good conflict management skills. An ill-timed joke or misinterpreted comment can turn a conversation into a conflict, ruining the fun and increasing the stress for everyone involved. This year, take a few minutes to brush up on your communication and conflict management skills. We hope the tips and resources below will help you and the families you serve avoid conflict and have a joyous holiday season.

Best wishes for a happy and stress-free holiday season from the Resource Center Team!

Robyn Cenizal, Project Director

## Tips of the Month

Coping with holiday stress often begins with healthy communication and conflict resolution. Here are some tips to maintain positive relationships during this busy time of year:

- Avoid accusatory statements so that the listener is more willing to respond positively.
- When stress levels rise, practice calming techniques such as time-outs, soft voices, humor, or smiling.
- Avoid hot-button topics and focus on keeping the conversation light and cordial.
- Accept your differences and work towards a compromise. While conflict can be stressful, forgiveness can strengthen your family and your relationship.

Find [more tips](#) on how to effectively manage conflict in our Strong Families: Tips for Healthy Conflict Management tip sheet.

## Featured Resources

The Resource Center's [Virtual Library](#) has collected more than 1000 materials in a variety of formats including fact sheets, research-to-practice briefs, brochures, pamphlets, training resources, program reports or evaluations, and research materials.

Select the links below to view our featured December resources:

- **Strong Families: Tips for Healthy Conflict Management (Tip Sheet)**  
This tip sheet provides specific tips to improve communication skills. It is designed as an informal handout for families in support of the companion resource for providers, *Tips for Service Providers: Healthy Conflict Management* tip sheet.
- **Tips for Service Providers: Healthy Conflict Management (Tip Sheet)**  
This tip sheet is designed to support service providers in discussing the topic of healthy conflict management skills with the families they serve.
- **Module 2: Integrating Healthy Relationship Skills into Social Services (Module II)**  
This resource provides in-depth coverage of relationship skills and principles. It includes many strategies for positively coping with stress.

## Events

The Resource Center's [Events Calendar](#) offers a listing of Resource Center events and other national, regional, and community-wide events that might be of interest.

Upcoming events include:

- **Stay tuned! New Resource Center webinar on the benefits of *Integrating Healthy Relationship Education in High School and College*.**

The webinar will feature speakers from both research and field work, and will highlight free resources through the Resource Center to support youth-focused relationship education. Date and registration information will be provided soon.

- **Webinar: Taking Financial Literacy to the Next Level: Integrating Financial Capability Services into Family Strengthening Programs on Tuesday, December 15, 2015, at 3:00 PM EST**

This webinar, hosted by the Office of Community Services (OCS) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will explore how innovative family strengthening programs have addressed these financial barriers to economic stability and introduce participants to "[Building Financial Capability: A Planning Guide for Integrated Services](#)," a new guide from OCS and CFED with tools that walk organizations step-by-step through the process of developing a plan to integrate financial capability services into their work.

## Feedback and Technical Assistance

If you have suggestions or wish to speak with a Resource Center staff member, please [contact us](#) and we will be happy to assist you. If you would like to request technical assistance, please submit a [Training and Technical Assistance Request Form](#) and our Technical Assistance Coordinator will contact you.

To learn more about the Resource Center visit us at [www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org](http://www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org)

The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families supports safety-net service providers as they integrate healthy marriage and relationship education skills into service delivery systems as part of a comprehensive, culturally appropriate, family-centered approach designed to promote self-sufficiency.

Follow Us on Twitter: 

[Subscribe](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)