Whether you are a pro at working from home or new to this adventure, none of us were completely prepared for the changes forced on everyone at the start of this pandemic. But now is not the time to pressure yourself to fit an image of the “perfect” Mom or Dad. With many parents now playing the role of full-time earner, caregiver, and teacher, expectations can be very high. And it’s not just families having issues. High rents mean that 40% of renters live with roommates. These single people are finding themselves dealing with issues from snippy texts accusing you of eating the last pickle, to that roommate who never puts down the toilet seat. The simmering passive aggression of a bad roommate situation is trying, even in the best of circumstances. In the context of a global pandemic, tricky roommate dynamics can risk becoming unbearable. But, in all of these situations, you can take steps now to help defuse potential conflict.

Until recently, our lives were, for the most part, fast-paced. But the world’s current situation has made changes that have a major impact on our family life. Within a shared space and time, we must organize a time for schoolwork, office work, listening to our kids, sharing with and offering affection to older family members in our home, calming fears, and doing our best to overcome our circumstances. It’s vital parents are realistic about the hours they can work from home while their kids are off school. Sending the kids off to school for 8 hours a day didn’t mean they were actively learning the entire day. Even in high school, there is down time throughout the day. So, right now, veteran homeschool families are recommending making a schedule to allow for academic time but also relaxation time, outdoor activities, chores in the home, creativity time and even screen time to allow families to have the essential “alone time” everyone needs. It’s great to spend quality time with children — but after a few days, let alone weeks, of nonstop caregiving and fighting for them to complete their homework, any parent will rightfully feel overwhelmed. Give yourself a break! You will not be evaluated at the end of your isolation time as to how much you were able to accomplish in all areas from professional work to home economics.

It is also not fair to criticize those you share a home with, whether it is a family member or roommate. This is new to everyone. Before this pandemic, those of us who worked outside the home spent more time with our co-workers than our families. Now those numbers are reversed and we find ourselves maybe feeling a little remorseful about wanting to go back to work away for the chaos of home life. It’s okay!! You can completely LOVE your family and still not want to be with them 24/7. It does not make you a bad person. It makes you human and we are all learning to adjust as needed. Remember that the first thing you need to do when you find your stress and/or anxiety growing...SELF-CARE! Because if you are feeling stressed out, most likely others in your home are also. Kids get stressed out too! And you will be of no use to them if you don’t take care of yourself first.
**Conflict Help — Perspective Triangle Strategy**

When you need to set yourself free from negative emotions, negotiators suggest that you metaphorically "go to the balcony" and look at the conflict with some detachment. It’s easier said than done!! But the perspective triangle strategy allows you to detach yourself and get some clarity. Clarity is important if you want to resolve conflict and avoid escalation.

**Step #1: Your Own Perspective** — This step requires you to achieve a higher degree of self-awareness. You do so by asking yourself what’s really bothering you. What pain are you trying to avoid? What are you protecting yourself from? Through the emotions and the behavior you are displaying, what needs are you trying to satisfy? Are you looking to be significant to the other? Or to feel secure? Are you trying to connect with the other, or to feel connected with yourself (especially if you feel down, sad, or depressed)?

Inquire, go deep into yourself, and clarify what the conflict is really about. In fact, chances are that while the fight is about a specific issue, in reality, you are after something that lies at a deeper level. What is it? Get clarity, and you will be able to come up with different options on how you can get what you really want.

**Step #2: The Other’s Perspective** — This step is fundamental. It requires you to have empathy and through empathy to widen your understanding of what’s really going on. Put yourself in the shoes of the other. For a moment, suspend your own judgment and do your best to see the situation you’re confronting from the perspective of the other. What might influence the position taken by the other? What experiences shape his or her understanding? What’s going on in the life of the other? What needs is she or he satisfying with a particular behavior? Is the other looking for significance? Or rather for love and connection? Is it a way to feel secure?

What’s the real intention of the other party? Go deeper and ask yourself: How might the other interpret my own words and behavior? What can I do differently to meet the underlying needs of the other and at the same time satisfy my own?

When you combine the insights you gained from considering your own perspective as well as that of the other, you can have a better understanding of the issue at hand and the ways in which you can resolve it.

**Step #3: The Third Party’s Perspective** — Often, someone from the outside can give us a fresh perspective about a problem you are trying to resolve. In this step, you put yourself in the position of a third party observing the situation you are involved in. Imagine you’re sitting in a movie theatre, watching your conflict projected on a screen as if it were a movie. What is it all about? What does the spectator tell you about your own behavior and judgment? What is he or she seeing? What advice does the third party give you? What would she or he tell you about the other’s real intention? And so on.

Providing three different lenses, the Perspective Triangle Strategy allows you to get necessary emotional detachment, to gain valuable insight, and to have a broader and deeper understanding of the conflict. It allows you to shift from a victim position to a leadership position. By making you stronger, it empowers you.

**Here is what you need to remember:**

**Change doesn’t start with the other. Change begins with you, from within you. In this sense, conflict can always be an opportunity:** For better communication, for a dialogue about problems that matter, for a more authentic relationship, for self-growth.

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**Virtual Classes and Talks available!**

**Stress & Resilience**

Contact EAPC for VIRTUAL session!!!! Handouts will be sent before then we can talk virtually! (contact EAPC to register—772-2597)

Join the EAPC for an interactive workshop on identifying your triggers and walk away with tools to help manage those while building resilience.

**NEW! Mindful Time Out**

7 May 20 !!! VIRTUAL!!!

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Join Christine, in a relaxed environment, for a cup of coffee or tea at the start your day and emerge revitalized inspired, after some coffee with friends.

**Stone Art Therapy**

May, June, July, August dates!

See flyer. 1130-1300

ASAP bldg. 10250, Room F

Take a break from current stressors and Come do a little art therapy with the EAPC.

**safeTALK**

Fri, 26 Jun 20—
0900-1200/1300-1600

Fri, 10 Jul 20—
0900-1200/1300-1600

ASAP bldg. 10250 , Room H

(772-2597 or FAP—772-5914 to register)

Empowering Suicide Prevention training that prepares anyone (15+) to connect people to help

**Chillin’ Out—Anger Mngt**

Thu, 28 May 20—0900-1000

ASAP bldg. 10250 , Room F

(772-2597 or FAP—772-5914 to register)

Small group setting designed for support in understanding what stressors trigger certain reactions and how to minimize the effects of those stressors.