

## Keep the Peace — Avoiding Disagreements & Family Drama during the Holidays

*Seasonal celebrations often bring together people with different backgrounds, opinions and perspectives. This can create a wonderful opportunity to share and learn about each other, but it can also spark disagreements. Learn tips on avoiding conflict and how to get along with family and friends during the holidays.*

While there are times when sharing opinions and debating topics can be a productive way to build connections, large holiday celebrations generally aren't the best time or place. Share positivity by setting expectations, intervening in disagreements early and encouraging positive interactions to avoid family drama during the holiday.

### Set Expectations

Anyone can be an advocate for holiday harmony. The responsibility doesn't need to fall to the host.

- Prior to the event, remind everyone you'd like to keep the gathering a happy experience for everyone.
- Encourage family members and friends to set aside topics that could create disagreements or other family drama during the holidays.
- Recruit like-minded friends and family members to join you as a peacekeeper. Ask them to help keep things positive.
- Make sure people understand passive-aggressive or snide comments are not welcome. Sometimes people don't even realize they are being critical, so a gentle reminder usually does the trick.

### Be Prepared

Anticipate any points of disagreement or tension ahead of time and brainstorm how to deal with hostile family members to avoid your group's usual points of controversy.

- Come with good-natured conversation topics in mind. Talking about positive shared memories can be a great way to steer conversations away from controversial topics.
- If someone abruptly changes the subject away from something potentially touchy — chime in so the new conversation gains momentum.
- Stand up for anyone who is being bullied or disrespected.
- Instead of waiting for tensions to rise, take action early to keep things positive.

### **Mediate Disputes**

If disagreements, arguments and other family drama still seem to occur during the holidays, step in.

- Pivot to a light or funny topic. It's one of the easiest ways to diffuse a tense situation.
- Resist the urge to take a side or assign blame.
- Nudge folks to a more appropriate topic. If that doesn't work, a calm, firm reminder that this conversation and actions are not appropriate might do the trick.
- If people still don't listen: Try and redirect one of the participants to a different room or activity to cool off.
- Don't dwell. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt and move on.

### **More from Hello4Health:**

- [Connecting Across Differences](#)
- [Listening for Connection](#)
- [Deepening Conversations](#)