

Tension is building in our home as we have now been dealing with the stressors of the pandemic for over a year. We are now having more disagreements without resolution. Can you give me some tips on how to reduce conflict and make effective apologies following a conflict?

A: Increased sensitivity, irritability, anxiety, and frustration are just some of the emotions that have emerged during this unsettling time. The prolonged uncertainty and lack of social distraction have put even the most easy-going families on edge due to physical and mental exhaustion. Try creating rules as a family to reduce tension, such as: no harsh words, say you're sorry, and accept apologies with thank you. Create a safe space or comfort room where a family member can go for some time alone or with one other person to decompress. When making a sincere apology, keep the focus on your own actions rather than the other person's response. Offer a way to repair the hurt associated with the conflict. Do not overdo your apology or focus on blame or shame. Reflect on ways to avoid a recurrence of the conflict. Allow the other member of your family time to forgive and heal. We all need to empathize with the ones we love in order to [heal together](#).