

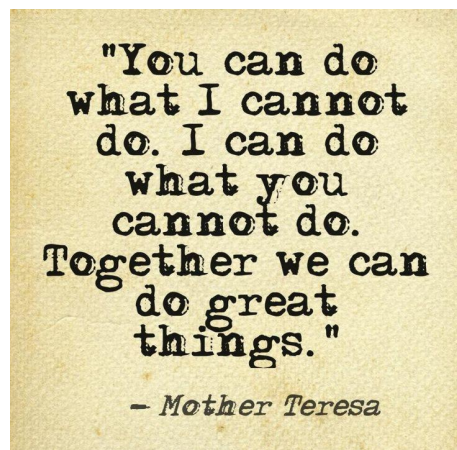
We're In This Together

5/1/2020

Over the past few weeks, Sarah and I have talked about different ways you and your family can make life a little easier during the COVID-19 pandemic. One very important way is by recognizing the social support system you have in your own home- your spouse/partner. Throughout the course of your relationship, you and your spouse/partner have hopefully learned to lean on one another during other difficult times. Life during COVID-19 is no different.

The two of you are a team. You've got each other's backs. But, it's easy to forget that in the face of current daily stressors. Right now, a lot of people are just trying to hang in there. They feel scattered and like they're constantly playing catch up. If that's you, you might also be feeling like you're in this alone or that it's up to you to keep everything together.

That's just not true. Your partner is in this with you. The two of you can work together to support one another and deal with all the things that are being thrown your way. It's important to have regular check-ins with each other to see how you're each handling everything going on and to discuss your needs. Are you both playing to your strengths? Is either of you feeling overwhelmed or taken for granted?





Now, these conversations are not a time to complain about each other or to place blame. Taking some time to talk to each other about what's working, what's not and how to fix it is a great way to remind yourselves that you're on the same team and to iron out any difficulties.

One of the big things that's come up lately for the families I work with is figuring out how to divide up the supervision of their kids, especially when both parents work. In many cases, one parent is taking on the majority of homeschooling duties. But this only works well if that parent is not feeling resentful about taking on that role or burned out by the work required. The same goes for all of the other roles you and your partner have. There are some roles you each naturally fall into and others you both avoid like the plague. You'll have to do some compromising to make sure neither of you is stuck in roles that you dislike.

Trade off responsibilities when possible. If you're normally responsible for making dinner, this would be a great time for your partner to take over that duty once or twice a week so that you can take a break or do other things. If your partner is normally in charge of supervising the kids during down time, it would be great if you take over sometimes to give your partner a break.

Another thing that's been helpful for the families I work with, both during quarantine and as a general rule, is divide and conquer. It's okay that you not do everything together as a family right now. As we talked about last week, you're all going to have moments when you need some time alone or when you feel overwhelmed by having the whole family together. It's helpful to split the kids up sometimes- you take one and your spouse takes the other.

It's up to you and your partner to decide how to divide up responsibilities. The important thing is that you find a way to do it so that you don't resent each other. Finding some time for just the two of you is also important. This doesn't mean that you have to carve out hours of time. But take a few minutes here and there to just focus on each other. Let your partner know that you're there for them and ask them to do the same for you. You'll both be better able to handle everything life's throwing at you right now if you keep remembering that you and your partner are in this thing together.