



## Tips for communicating under stress

When we speak in anger or frustration, it can block communication and make a stressful situation worse. The chart below lists some ways we might be tempted to react when we are stressed. Then it suggests a different approach that will likely work better.

Instead of...	Try...
Waiting until you are ready to blow up to address the problem	Speaking up before it becomes a crisis
Blaming (for example: “You made me miss my deadline.”)	Describing your feelings or problem (for example: “I was really upset when I missed that deadline.”)
Accusing (for example: “You always leave the kitchen a mess.”)	Problem solving (for example: “Can we work out some ground rules to keep the kitchen clean?”)
Yelling, interrupting, name-calling	Making an extra effort to listen and speak with respect
Raising an ongoing problem in the middle of a high-stress time	Waiting until things are calmer and there’s time to talk it over
Blurting out the first thing that comes to mind	Taking a deep breath and thinking about how to say it first



## Let’s talk about it

- What have you noticed about the way people communicate when they are stressed?
- Can you think of a situation you’ve been in where better communication would have helped?