



WELLNESS CORNER

Protecting Relationships During Stressful Periods



When work piles up and deadlines get tight, good communication is usually the first thing we drop. Heavy pressure triggers our defensive survival instincts in the nervous system. Instead of working together smoothly, we might unintentionally snap at coworkers, assume the worst, or go silent and withdraw from the conversation. Yet strong relationships are not just nice to have. They are the true foundation for trust, team health, and long-term success.



Stress also travels home easily. When we bring tense work habits and communication patterns into our personal lives, we end up hurting the people who care about us most. Protecting these vital connections does not mean you must remove all stress from your life. It means building emotional awareness. By pairing simple mindfulness practices with the insights of Nonviolent Communication (NVC), you can transform quick-tempered reactions into calm and meaningful connection.

Four Habits for Mindful & Compassionate Communication Under Stress

Use the S.T.O.P. Tool to Defuse Reactivity: Before you reply to an upsetting message or jump into an argument, pause your nervous system. Stop what you are doing. Take a grounding breath or take a moment. Observe what you feel and notice in your mind and body without judging the experience. Proceed with a clear intention.



Focus on Facts Instead of Stories: When we feel stressed, we often guess other people's motives and assume the worst. Stick strictly to facts. For example, replace "You do not care about my input" with "I noticed we have not yet discussed my feedback on this proposal draft."

Align Real Needs Instead of Blame: Blaming someone puts them on the defensive. Sharing your needs helps them understand you. Instead of saying, "Stop interrupting my day," say: "When meetings get added at the last minute, I feel anxious because I need focused time and energy to finish this report." That invites collaborative teamwork rather than conflict.



Build an End-of-Day Transition Buffer: Give yourself five minutes between ending work and joining your household. A short walk or a few mindful breaths lets your body drop workday tension. This simple break keeps job stress from spoiling family time.

Maintaining Strong Connections Every Day

Great communication is a daily habit, especially during hard times. When you pause, distinguish facts and observations from judgments, and explain what you need and value, you protect your most important bonds and relationships. Pressure will still happen, but you can use it to build deeper trust at work and at home.



Karson Wong

Consultant,
Human Dynamic
Hong Kong