# WR9 Managing Relationships at Home Transcript

This is video nine of the Working Remotely Be Connected module. We're continuing looking at the social and behavioural structure that we can create to make working at home more effective. And now we're looking at how we can manage our relationships at home.

0:24

So welcome back to the videos. This video is all about getting along when you're confined in the same space. Because when you're used to going to a workplace each day, it can seem quite confining when you're living and working in the same space all of the time without getting a break from it. And this is exacerbated when you have family or other people sharing your home while you're working. And it can lead to unexpected stress when you're working at home, instead of the enjoyment of the potential flexibility that working from home can bring.

0:55

And so in addition to managing our working from home, in terms of our routines, and our space as we've already talked about, and our expectations of each other. We do need to manage, how do we actually get along with other people, when we’re confined in the space and we don't have much option about getting away from each other as you do when you're working in the office, while when we're working at home, we're all in the same space during work hours, as well as after work. And especially if you're sharing the same space as you work. For example if you've got, if other members of the family also need to work on your kitchen table or the dining room table, as well as yourself.

1:36

It reminds me of a time that I'd like to share with you, when I sailed from Australia to New Zealand. And we were in a very small boat, it was about 26 foot long. There were four people on board. And this is a very small space it's an exceedingly small space. It's much smaller than even a one bedroom flat. We had four people, and it was nine days to do this crossing.

2:02

So we couldn't get off the boat, and there was nowhere else to go. We weren't confined in this space. And it was fine when we were sailing. We had a job to do. We had a direction, we have purpose, and we have routines. We have the job to do, we were doing it. And all day, there were different daily routines throughout the day and a really strict routine at night for The Night Watch. And all of that meant that everything felt fine with, we could see and feel that we were achieving our purpose and making way towards our destination. And then we became becalmed. There was nothing we can do about it. The wind is completely outwith our control. So we have the engine on but my goodness, it was so slow. We were only able to go about one or two knots and we still had 900 miles to go, so it doesn't feel like we're making any progress at all towards our destination.

2:57

There's nothing we could do about it, and interestingly we went didn't get frustrated with each other, despite living on top of each other in such a small space all of the time. We managed to maintain a really positive atmosphere, despite the uncertainty of what we would actually be able to get there. And particularly because the fuel wouldn’t run the whole way. But part of how we did this was recognising that we still needed routines and without really preparing it, we kind of created our own new routines. And we gave ourselves space to be separate from each other. So during the day we all had our own stations.

3:35

We would each be in our own spot. So Paul would sit literally just in this space here. I was just out of the picture right up in the front and in the bows. We would sit and read books, and look out over the horizon, and then Mark and the Skipper, they tended to sit in the stern of the boat, and we would read books, we’d look out at the horizon and we would stare at this endless flat blue sea that disappeared into the blue sky, and we couldn't even get off the boat, because there all these Man o’War jellyfish surrounding the boat.

4:14

So we were looking out for anything unusual, things that could help to make us laugh. And, and, like giant turtles every now and then would turn up, so we've divert a little bit to go and see that. It would be something special and something interesting and positive that brought us together. And part of our routine was that we would also come together for meal times, and a routine gin and tonic at 6pm to watch the sunset, and really see if we could see that little green flash that everyone speaks about as the sun sets at sea.

And so part of what helped us really get on and not get on top of each other, despite the small space and the situations that we were going through, was creating these new routines for what we’re doing and giving ourselves space where we weren't disturbing each other and having our own personal space.

So thinking about this if you're working in your home and you're there 24 /7 effectively, and especially while other people are living there and work, and maybe also working from home. How do you give yourselves separate spaces to be alone, and allow yourself spaces to think, work, and do whatever you need to do without being disturbed, or having other people's expectations on you all of the time. And then also other times that you can be together, you can do things together.

Because what you want to avoid is getting to that situation where you're so much on top of each other that you just get frustrated when people aren't doing things when you want to do it.

5:42

And you’re literally snarling like foxes at each other, because that creates a really unpleasant environment. We all hate it. It's very unproductive for everybody. It is very stressful. And it's destructive of your relationships. So what you really want to think about is how do you create a super, positive environment, where you can continue to enjoy living and doing things together, even now you may be in each other's space, all day, instead of only after work, or outside of work, work hours and at weekends.

So acknowledging that your routines have changed, and that you need to make new routines, as we talked about in one of the earlier sessions. You’re wanting to create this positive environment that’s great.

6:26

So, you're all having positive expectations from each other. There's lots of things that we can do around positivity and really making it, and paying attention to notice what is good and what are the positives. We need to think about what's the time that suits you best for working. So remember we talked about in ‘Managing your Time’ to put the rocks into your schedule first. So these might be things that times when your children need you to attend to them, or when would you actually be able to focus on your work. So put them first into your schedule. Schedule all the commitments that you have for both home and for work. Especially important: recognise when your power hour is, and also when is the equivalent power hour for other people who are living and working in your space. So how do you work that all together?

7:13

Importantly, also think about the emotional connection and the emotional side of being in your space all the time. What you don't want to do is get to the point where you're spending all your time just existing together, and not doing any fun things together, either. Because you say “well we’re together all the time. Why do we need to specifically think about the fun?” But those are the quality times in your life. So be aware that even if you’re in the same space 24/7, you still need to make sure that you have the quality time together with your family. Recognise other people's emotions, build up your compassion and understanding. So when things are happening, listen first understand. Understand their perspective. And also pay attention and understand your own perspective. Notice what you're feeling and understand what that feeling is telling you, and then feel able to talk with other people around you about it. So what is it they're feeling? Help them to reflect and understand what that feeling tells them too.

8:13

And remember we talked about the idea of having a team charter with your work colleagues? Why not consider having a family charter? So, how is it that you want to live and work together? What would you expect of each other? When do you expect to be available for family time? When must we respect that we are at work, and not to be disturbed? Because that gives us clarity on our expectations, and also the boundaries of the behaviours that we would like from each other, and what's not tolerated. How are we giving each other space and what, how do we want to do that for each other?

8:55

This is an important time as well, to actually be open and listen to what other people need as well. And be aware of how do we build that flexibility that we were talking about earlier. So, what works for each person so that you come up with a whole family plan that works for everybody? So you’re creating a situation that feels positive, you have a deep understanding of the feeling and emotions involved. Particularly when you're first making that change to working at home because uncertainty and change quite often these feelings of stress, and that makes it much more likely that people will instantly shift into a negative emotion when you're having interactions with each other.

So it really takes an active action on everybody's part to really notice what is positive. One thing that works very well with families, is to sit down at the dinner table in the evening or maybe at breakfast and talk about “What three things have gone well for us today?” Or if it's breakfast time “What are we planning to do today that's really positive?” Paying attention to these positive things that have gone well, because we so often take them for granted.

10:03

And it's about really constructively creating that positive atmosphere. What are we enjoying about each other? What are we doing for fun? What are we doing that will renew our energy in a really positive way? As we talked about earlier on.

And while we’re also thinking about this, we need to think about and really make clear with all the family how do we communicate when it's okay to be disturbed, and when it's not okay to be disturbed? And as we talked at the beginning it is about creating your workspace so you focus and concentrate on your work in that space, and to agree spaces for other family members. So they may have things where they need to do, whether they're at work or they have other things and for your children, or other people in the family perhaps, do you have a play space?

Thinking all of these things and having that clarity with each other, creates the clarity around, what are the spaces and times for work, what are the spaces and times for our personal time? And what are the spaces and times that we create when we come together and congregate and support each other.

11:08

And so it’s all about how do we avoid getting on top of each other, and avoid having fractured tempers. So for the last part of what I love you to do, is really think about: “what are some of the things you're already doing that creates a positive environment at home? And thinking about those positive relationships, how are you nurturing the relationships, so that you can get along well with each other? What other things could you do? To what extent do you already know and understand the needs of everyone else in your family for getting along together? And what are the things that you don't know, or the assumptions that we're making but may not be absolutely correct? When could you start having those conversations? These open and honest conversations around, how will we create really positive space here at home and get along together now that we're working at home, and are in each other's spaces, more of the time without having that time away from home when we go to work.

12:02

So, good luck with all of this and thinking about the working at home. And thank you very much for taking part in this module. The last thing I'd like, leave for you to think about is, “what next?”

What are you going to be committed to doing as a result of working through this programme and thinking about how am I going to work remotely, either with your dispersed colleague, team members and colleagues. When you’re in the workplace or with dispersed team members and colleagues, when you are at home yourself.   
And thinking also about how are you managing working in this home environment so it's not only good for me and my colleagues at work, and it's also good for the family and other people around me in my home environment.

So what next, and what are you committed to?

12:55

And I hope you enjoyed this module. There are two other modules in this programme for the College Development Network: Managing remotely, and Leading remotely. I hope you'll find them of interest as well.