

在疫情下重拾私人空間

Regaining personal space in the pandemic

香港生活空間有限，本來要有私人空間已不是易事，留家抗疫的這段時間更是難上加難。不少家長曾指出，與伴侶和子女長時間留在家中，較易發生爭執。孩子較年幼的話，父母一方面渴望私人空間，另一方面又會為產生這種想法而感到內疚，內心十分矛盾。究竟有甚麼方法能讓每位家庭成員享受私人空間，同時促進彼此關係呢？

Hong Kong is known for its small living spaces and personal space is hard to come by. Under the pandemic, it has become an even rarer gem. Many parents have pointed out that staying home for long periods of time have resulted in frequent arguments with their children and spouse. Parents with younger children also often feel guilty about craving personal space. Can family members enjoy personal space, while improving their relationships with one another?

大樓若要建得高及建得穩，根基必須打得好，才能屹立不倒。同樣道理，要子女在家中健康成長，家庭的根基必須穩健。尤其在抗疫期間，家長就是家庭的根基及支柱，因此除了照顧好自己的身體外，我們也應預留時間好好照顧自己的心靈健康。

父母不單需要私人時間來處理生活的繁瑣事，亦可以在私人時間中享受不同嗜好或興趣所帶來的樂趣，或與朋友傾訴，幫助自己放鬆心情，整理負面情緒。這樣，家長才能有足夠的精神及穩定的情緒去照顧及教育子女。因此，除非家長擁有過多私人時間而忽略子女，否則，擁有私人時間是合理及合宜的，對子女健康成長也有間接的幫助，家長必須認清這個重要的概念，無須內疚。



為自己留一點私人空間

子女看見家長在家，一般都會很渴望與父母互動，但家長在抗疫期間除了要處理家務外，同時還要在家工作，家中有年幼子女的話更容易感到吃力，因為他們需要更多關注及照顧。家長可耐心教育子女在家工作的概念，讓他們明白家長在家須專心工作，期間不能被騷擾。父母可將工作及子女活動的空間分隔開來，讓子女學會尊重各自的空間。

此外，家長可與子女一起協議及制定大家的活動時間表，預先讓子女知道家長何時需要工作、何時是家長的私人休息時間，以及何時可陪伴他們、與

他們玩耍。這樣，孩子便知道無須大吵大嚷去爭取與父母相處的時間，或在家中搗蛋來吸引注意，家長亦可安心享受私人時間及空間。

提升親子關係

若抗疫期間家中爭吵不斷，大家不妨嘗試令親子關係更緊密的遊戲或活動，透過親子互動來增加彼此默契。較靜態的活動包括一起做麵包或包餃子，家長可一邊與子女烹飪，一邊細說與活動有關的故事、旅遊趣事或童年點滴。小朋友可從中瞭解家長過去的生活，擴闊視野。不過在說故事的時候切記不要變成說教，否則子女日後可能會對親子活動感到抗拒。若喜歡動態一點的活動，可和子女一起製作氣墊球機，用紙皮包着餐桌或小桌子，並以樽蓋將波子推向對方的龍門內。抗疫期間不能外出，家長更需運用創意，將戶外的世界帶入家中，例如與子女玩露營遊戲，若空間充裕更可用被子架起帳篷，大家手持電筒，一起窩在帳篷內談心。



A good foundation is necessary for building a tall and sturdy building. The same goes for a family – a good foundation is essential to create a healthy environment for children to thrive. Parents' role as backbones of the family is especially crucial during the pandemic, hence we must take care of both our physical and mental health.

As parents, we must find time to deal with our own problems and reconnect with our hobbies, catch up with friends or manage our stress and negative emotions. Only in this way can we have the capacity to look after and nurture our children. Therefore, having some personal space is completely reasonable and may even benefit children's development. We should never feel guilty about having time for ourselves since it is indispensable in our everyday life.

Reserve time for ourselves

It is only natural for children to want to interact with their parents when they see them at home. But parents have chores and work, and life can even be more hectic when there are younger children in the household because they require more attention. We can educate children about the concept of home office, so they understand that mum and dad need to work in peace. Moreover, we can section out our home so parents can work separately from where children usually hang out, and boundaries can be respected.

In addition, we can create timetables with children so they know when we will work, rest and spend time with them. This way, children will understand they do not have to yell or make a mess in order to get our attention or spend time with us. We will also be able to enjoy our private time and space in peace.

Improve parent-child relationship

If arguments have indeed become more frequent at home, feel free to try some family activities that may help boost parent-child relationships. More static activities include baking bread or making dumplings together while sharing stories of your childhood and travel so they can get a glimpse of your life to expand their horizons. Yet, do not turn stories into lectures, or else children may be reluctant to do anything else with their parents in the future. For more active exercises, parents can play a game of air hockey by taping cardboard onto a table and use bottle caps as strikers. Since going out is not an option during the pandemic, we should use our creativity and bring the outdoors into our homes. For instance, we can pretend to go camping by using blankets as tents if there is enough space, then turn on our flashlights and spend some quality family time together.