10 Tips for Effective Email Communication
with friends and family

Email correspondence is not as straightforward as it seems. Although it can be a fun and effect way to share information with family and friends, it can also lead to miscommunication or even broken relationships. Below are 10 tips for using email in a healthy and helpful way.

1. **Decide carefully who should be cc-ed on email.** Although you may be sending an email as part of group mailing, you should not feel the need to hit "Reply All". Often sending a response to the Sender is enough and it helps minimize "unimportant email" for others.

2. **If you need to clarify or resolve conflict or a misunderstanding, pick up the phone.** Although an automatic reaction, especially if someone has misunderstood something in *your* email, may be to send a quick email back this is *not* advisable. Email is the worst type of conflict resolution and can exacerbate it.

3. **Minimize your use of BLOCK or** bold **to highlight words**. Although some of us (especially highly visual people) love playing with visual cues, it can be misunderstood by others (especially if they don't use them). To minimize sounding "loud" (often associated with BLOCK) or annoyed (often associated with **bold**), just use regular font styles – it's safer.

4. **Make your email messages meaningful**. We all have enough email, so let's make what we send "worth reading". All your readers will appreciate this.

5. **Include** <u>one</u> **topic per email**. Although you may have numerous things to ask/say, it is best to limit your requests or important news to 1/email. In this way your Subject line can reflect your message and your reader will know where to file it and how to address it (at a glance).

6. **Use a clear Subject line to name/clarify what your email is about**. Since most of us receive a huge amount of emails, we need an easy way to know whether to open an email, where to file it and which ones need action. The Subject line is a helpful tool for this.

7. **Add important directional words to the Subject line when an email needs special attention.** Words like "response needed" or "urgent" are helpful in knowing what is expected and by when i.e. "cottage rental –

response needed" or "movie plans – response needed by Friday".

8. **Keep the Subject line the same if you are responding to someone's email message.** This helps find an email trail and allows you to organize your email by Subject, if needed.

9. **Don't say anything in an email you would not say in person**. Email is often shared and exists beyond the day you send it. Since email misunderstanding is also very easy, it is critical to only say what you would comfortably say to a person face-to-face.

10. **Be short!** Most of us have way too many emails and too little time in the day to read them. Keeping them short and to the point will help maximize the chance they are read (to the end of the message) and minimize the reader pressing "Delete" before reading it.