

Good Communication Practices



Communicate Clearly

- Establish presence.
- Maintain eye contact.
- State positively what you need or want. Make "I" statements. Say, "I think...," or "I feel...," rather than "you should...," or "you always..."
- Be sure your body language matches what you are saying in words
- Share what you feel as well as what you think.
- Make it clear to others that what you have to say is important to you and to the health of your loved one.
- Use facts rather than opinions or assumptions to describe medical problems.

Say...	Instead of...
My mother has been coughing for two weeks	I think she has bronchitis.
My father cannot climb up a flight of stairs without help	My father is getting weaker.

Listen Actively

Active Listening is a process by which we make a conscious effort to understand someone else. This process consists of three components: Sensing, Interpreting and Checking.

Sensing

We gather information in three ways:

- Verbal — words that are spoken
- Vocal — tone, rate and volume
- Visual — body language, facial expression

Interpreting

When we are interpreting, we are trying to understand the meaning the speaker intends. To show that you do understand something, reflect that by saying:

- I get the feeling that you...
- If I understand you right, you...
- Let me see if I'm with you so far...
- My impression is... Does that fit?
- Would it be accurate to say...
- I'm sensing that...
- The part I understand is...

Checking

When we are checking, we make reflective statements and ask for clarification. Keep checking until you share a common understanding of the situation. Use statements and questions like the following:

- The part that isn't clear to me is...
- Could you tell me...
- Can you say more about...
- I don't quite get what you mean. Is it...
- For example?
- Do you have a specific example in mind?
- I am not clear what you mean by...