Listen Carefully

“\textit{We don’t seem to understand one another. I keep trying to explain how I feel, but she doesn’t listen. We must make tough decisions, but we can’t communicate.}”

Listen for Hidden Messages

- Look at the speaker. Face him so he knows that you are paying attention.
- Consider nonverbal messages. Does the body language match the words you hear? Look for feelings.
- Listen with empathy. Put yourself in the care receiver’s shoes. The anger expressed toward you could really be anger about the illness.
- Do not pretend to listen. If you are busy, say so.

Listen carefully is beneficial as family members make difficult decisions about the care of a dependent person. In stressful situations like caregiving, it is crucial to be attentive so you can hear what is said and understand what is intended.

Be Attentive

- Remove distractions. It is difficult to hear during a conversation when there is background noise.
- Listen to all the words. Stop talking so you can hear them.
- Accept what is said. Take time to listen to feelings and completely hear everything before agreeing or disagreeing.
- Wait. Silence allows the speaker to think and express his feelings.

As loss of vision and hearing occur, care receivers may become withdrawn. Careful listening lets them know you care about their ideas and enjoy their company.
When I listen, I:

In order to listen better, I need to:

Check for Understanding

- Get all the facts.
- Do not interrupt. Ask questions to clarify what is said.
- Put the verbal and nonverbal information together.
- Repeat in your own words what you thought you heard.
- Avoid judging, criticizing, and giving solutions.

Listen carefully because clear communication involves more than hearing what is said. It involves interpreting what we hear.

I can improve understanding by:

What future decisions do you anticipate?

For more information, read:


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This tip sheet is part of a series:

*Caregiving Relationships: For People Who Care for Adults*

University of Illinois Extension, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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Issued in furtherance of cooperative Extension Service work, Acts of May 8 and June 20, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunity in programs and employment.

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Updated 2019