
Listen Carefully

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Listening 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As loss of vision and hearing occur, care-receivers may become withdrawn.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.

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.

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 was said.

Avoid judging, criticizing, and giving solutions.

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