

Prepare to Care: 5 Steps for Family Planning

Lesson Background

Abstract:

This lesson uses AARP's "Prepare to Care: A Planning Guide for Families" workbook to discuss 5 steps to effective family caregiving. We focus on 2 of the steps: 1) Prepare to talk and 2) needs assessment of the one who will receive care. Effective Caregiving is Prepared Caregiving. Preparing means arming families with skills such as active listening*, assertive** communication and better organization of records, tasks, etc. Using these skills have been shown to ease some of the challenges of providing care to loved ones.

Active listening* (AL) is a communication skill that requires listening as much (or more) as talking in conversation. It requires re-stating back to each other what has been heard to confirm the message was received as intended. This does not mean *agreement* with what you hear; rather the goal is to convey *understanding* of what the other person is saying.

Assertive** communication is a respectful way to voice opinions and views with confidence without infringing on the rights and beliefs of others. "I" statements help to get your point across; by focusing on what is going on with you reduces the tendency to blame others.

While the emphasis here is on 'Prepare', there is much to be learned by all, including those who identify themselves as 'pros' at family caregiving.

Prepare with 5 steps for Care Planning:

- 1) Talk: Clear, assertive & regular communication: family, friends, providers
- 2) Team: A working group of committed individuals to plan, share, support
- 3) Needs: Ask, assess and know what is important, what matters to loved ones
- 4) Plan: Organize the steps necessary to fulfill the needs identified
- 5) Action: The only way to be successful is to be pro-active and put into motion!

We focus on 2 of these 5 steps:

- Step 1: Prepare to Talk with Active Listening
 - Active listening: (listening not telling) ensures clear, assertive & regular communication
 - Starting the Conversation: Tips for Success
- Step 3: Needs Assessment: Listening to Priorities & Wishes
 - Organization (records, methods, etc.) & Resources (who can help)
 - Letter of Last Instruction (Planning for the Future: Let's Talk About It fact sheet 1, page 3)