

## Proper Communication Between Caregivers and Patients

Chronic illness is among the most difficult topics of discussion, and yet, communication is paramount. Proper communication helps individuals and caregivers reach an understanding of needs and goals. However, there are bound to be differences in how families and caregivers communicate.

Explore our tips and tools to help keep communication clear between caregivers and patients:

1. **Understand your role.** Caregivers are crucial to care, but it's also helpful when they understand the bounds of their job. Even with the best of intentions, a caregiver might overstep their bounds when they believe they know what is best. Remember that, ultimately, the needs and wants of the diagnosed individual come first.
2. **Be honest and express your concerns.** Being a caregiver isn't easy, but neither are health issues. For the relationship to be most effective, both people need to speak about their feelings openly and candidly. Never project your feelings onto someone else and remember to use "I" statements when speaking about your own feelings and concerns.
3. **Be a good listener.** This may seem self-explanatory, but it can be easily forgotten. Being a good listener means you are not distracted by other tasks or technology. It may also include holding back suggestions or advice until the other person is done speaking.

Because everyone deserves to have their feelings heard, we also have tips to effectively communicate emotions:

1. Try to remember that all feelings are valid, even the negative ones. Suppressing one's feelings is unhelpful. No one is a mind reader and hiding your feelings only worsens the situation.
2. People need support. Don't be afraid to ask a friend or family member for help. Even caregivers need help, and that's no reason to be ashamed.
3. Pick the correct environment for big conversations. A more private setting and a calmer time of day is best for more difficult conversations. Both people involved should feel comfortable and be in a good mental state to delve deeper into emotional subjects.

Communication can be easier said than done. But when loved ones and caregivers talk frequently, listen and express emotions, it can create a more positive, beneficial environment for everyone involved.

Sources:

<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/caregivers/what-a-caregiver-does/communication.html>

<https://www.thiscaringhome.org/effective-communication-skills-for-better-caregiving/>

<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/caregiver-support/communication-tips-for-caregivers>