



Choosing Your Words: Harnessing the Power of Communication Handout

Taking care of another person can be stressful. It helps to know how to communicate well when you have many demands on you. When you have a lot to cope with it is so important to be able to communicate well. Good communication skills can help you care for yourself and the loved one that you are caring for.

What keeps you from sending the clear messages you need to send?

- Stressed, overwhelmed, not focused on you, but on what is coming at you
- Feeling so strongly or so emotionally charged that your perspective is skewed
- You learned that it is selfish to advocate for your feelings and needs
- Lack confidence in your thinking
- Fear risking upsetting someone, or being vulnerable
- Have conflict within you and it is difficult to sort out clearly what you need

Are you clear when you communicate what you feel, need or request from another? If not, they may not understand what you need from them.

Steps that can help you have clear communication.

- Start by becoming clear yourself. Slow down and listen to yourself. Listen to what you feel and need.
- Find calm. Wait until you are in control of your emotions. This will help you not react and communicate in a manner that you will regret.
- Make "I" statements.
- Describe what you observe. State what you see, hear, or notice, in specific terms without judgment. "I noticed___", or "I observed___."
- Share your feeling using only one feeling word to describe it. For example, "I feel sad, scared, worried, or confused."



- Next, state the need that you have. For example, “I feel ___ because I need or want ___.”
- Finally, make a request. This request needs to be specific and describe the action you want the person to take. For example, “I feel ___ because I need ___. Would you be willing to ___?”

When you take these steps, your communication will improve. You will benefit when you speak directly and clearly. It will empower you and improve your connection to others. Choose your words and let the world know who you are.

We are here to listen.