



## **Choosing Your Words: Harnessing the Power of Communication Handout**

It is important for caregivers to learn how to say what you need. State your concerns. Speak for yourself and your loved one with clear messages.

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

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

If you are unclear about what you are feeling or asking for, it will be hard for others to know what you need.

### **Steps You May Choose to Take to Improve Communication:**

- Start by becoming clear. Slow down and listen to yourself. Listen to what you feel and need.
- Find calm. Wait until you feel less stress and more in control of your emotions. Don't react and communicate in a manner that you will regret.
- Make "I" statements.
- State what you see, hear, or notice, in specific terms without judgment. "I noticed\_\_\_", or "I observed\_\_\_."
- Share your feeling using one-word; such as "I feel sad, scared, worried, or confused."
- Next, say what you need. "I feel \_\_\_ because I need or want \_\_\_."
- Lastly make a request that is clear and describes the helpful action you want the person to take. "I feel \_\_\_ because I need\_\_\_. Would you be willing to \_\_\_?"

Taking any one of these steps is going to move your message in a helpful direction. Speaking clearly and being direct is powerful. It is satisfying to speak honestly from your heart. Speaking directly will build a bond with others. Choose your words. Let the world know who you are.

**We are here to listen.**