

Tips for Better Communication with Family & Friends

- **Examine your needs.** What do you want, and what are your feelings about the situation?
- **What exactly is the problem?** Formulate this in one or two sentences.
- **Describe your thoughts and feelings clearly,** so the other person can understand your point of view.
- **Be persistent and flexible.** maybe you won't get exactly what you asked for, but you will get something that will be helpful.
- **Avoid substituting opinions for facts.** Try to use "I statements" frequently.
- **Give detailed information.** For example: taking care of Mom for two hours involves feeding her a snack, turning the radio to her favorite station, and taking her to the bathroom.
- **Break it down into smaller parts.** It's usually easier for people to say yes to a little request than to a big one!
- **Listen to whether the listener can fulfill the request.** If he or she cannot do the request, ask if a different time or request is possible and begin to negotiate.
- **If you are at an impasse, take a break.** Go back to the discussion at a future time. For example, agree to think about it and talk again tomorrow afternoon.
- **If appropriate, offer to do the task with the person.** For example, sit together with Mom for two hours first before your brother does it alone so that he can learn what is involved and feel more confident.
- **DON'T GIVE UP!** It may take many attempts before things change.