



Dealing with Difficult Family Members

Working Together & Moving Forward

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Is this you when you see that one family member walk in?

Why Are Families Difficult?

- If it wasn't a hot mess, they wouldn't need to know us!
- What's their family culture?
- Like attracts like?
- What's your community culture?

How Can We Get To Neutral?

- Change how you think about it
 - What words do you use?
- Change how you talk about it
 - CareTAKER
 - CareGIVER
 - CarePARTNER

How Can We Get To Neutral?

- Change how you treat it
 - Don't ignore it
 - Get other professionals involved
 - Ombudsman
 - APS
 - Consultant
 - Care manager

How Can We Get To Neutral?

- Then add the secret sauce
 - Determination
 - Hard work
 - Commitment

How Can We Work Together?

- Implement the ideas you learn here, but also
- **ASK THE FAMILY!**



3 Reasons for “Difficult”



3 Reasons for “Difficult”

1. Anger

- a. Fear
- b. Sadness
- c. Grief
- d. Loss of control
- e. Feelings of inadequacy
- f. Is a cry for love (compassion)

3 Reasons for “Difficult”

2. Grief

- a. What was
- b. What is
- c. What will never be

3 Reasons for “Difficult”

3. Loss

- a. Control
- b. Dreams
- c. Companionship
- d. Purpose
- e. Financial

3 Ways To Bring Down Tension

1. Approach

- a. Always with respect, kindness, and love--just like with people living with dementia
- b. Not when they're in the middle of something with their loved one
- c. As they come in

3 Ways To Bring Down Tension

2. Communication

a. Walk into it, not away from it

b. LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN

i. Empathetically

ii. Actively

iii. Validate

iv. Offer reassurance

3 Ways To Bring Down Tension

c. If you don't have a poker face,
don't fool yourself into thinking you
do

i. Take notes

d. Have a witness if necessary

3 Ways To Bring Down Tension

e. Have boundaries

i. “I agree, this is important.”

1. *“Yes, and” improv construct*

ii. “I agree. Not like this.”

1. *Never ever connect with a “but”*

iii. “I can’t concentrate when there’s yelling

1. *Neutral construction*

3 Ways To Bring Down Tension

3. Dump Defensiveness

- a. Dr Phil
- b. Body language
- c. FOCUS
- d. Unless...
 - i. Get a coworker

3 Ways To Work Together

1. Communication

a. No surprises

b. Consistency

c. Encourage!

d. Like Wayne Gretzky says...

3 Ways To Work Together

1. Communication (con't)
 - e. Create a community that includes families
 - i. Combine community outreach events with family events
 - ii. Acknowledge and appreciate family involvement

3 Ways To Work Together

1. Communication (con't)

iii. “Treat” the family

1. Try this:

iv. Send cards on important occasions

v. **BOLD, CAPS, UNDERLINE, HIGHLIGHT**

this: GO TO FUNERALS!

3 Ways To Work Together

1. Communication (con't)

f. MAKE the time

- i. Gloss over it now and pay the price later, OR
- ii. Frontload the effort now and reap the rewards down the road

3 Ways To Work Together

2. Education

- a. People just plain don't know what they don't know!
- b. Make education a part of your community culture
 - i. Don't rely on corporate
 - ii. Support group

3 Ways To Work Together

b. Make education a part of your community culture (con't)

iii. Invite experts

iv. New move-in packets

c. Do you know everything YOU need to know?

i. Keep learning

ii. Teach what you know

3 Ways To Work Together

d. Understand the constraints of the adult learner and...

i. A grieving soul

ii. An exhausted person

3 Ways To Work Together

3. Documentation

- a. If it's not documented, **IT DIDN'T HAPPEN!**
- b. To make the case with facts
- c. To offer reassurance

You're Never Alone

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