

There are several ways appreciation can be used in the caring relationship:

- **Express appreciation to the care receiver for things past and present, even if it is something small.** This shows the importance you place on expressing appreciation. It can also help the person receiving care feel that although he/she needs support, he/she still has something to give in return.
- **Make a weekly appreciation calendar for each family member.** Family members can write something on the calendar each week that they appreciate about you and each other.
- **Let each family member contribute to caregiving and have a special outing each month to show your appreciation.**
- **Do an appreciation silhouette by drawing an outline of each family member and writing within each outline all of the things you appreciate about that person.**

**Here are some ways to take time away
from the caregiving role:**

- Find a good respite care provider.
- Have a respite exchange network with other caregivers.
- Have a rotation of caregivers for a few hours each week where one family member stays with the care receiver while the others do a fun activity.

**Some examples of family activities
could include:**

- Write a family history together with stories about accomplishments, humorous events, and special memories.
- Record the life story of the care receiver.
- Do a scrapbook of favorite family recipes, photos, family tree, etc.
- Create a new tradition to be shared during holidays.
- Go for a bike ride together.

Techniques to gain cooperation

1. **Consider the capabilities of the care receiver.** What is your family member still capable of doing on his/her own or with a little help? Knowing the abilities of the elder can help us assess the activities and decisions in which he/she can still participate.
2. **Include the person in the decision-making process.** A sense of control can be enhanced by asking for the elder's participation in decisions ranging from meal choices to living arrangements. He/she can help you consider the available options and the positives and negatives of each choice. You can also learn more about the elder's preferences. It is important not to offer choices that are not realistic. For example, if the older person cannot drive safely, continuing to drive is not a choice he/she should be offered. However, getting a ride from the caregiver, a friend, taxi service, or a bus might be legitimate choices the elder could make.
3. **Be patient in allowing the elder to accomplish the tasks they are capable of doing.** Even accomplishing small tasks can be important to someone who has declining abilities. We might find ourselves rushing to button up elders' shirts or zip their coats. Although we mean to be helpful, we can be taking away another task from them and another piece of dignity. Planning for a little extra time to allow elders to accomplish a task can make them feel less dependent.
4. **Be knowledgeable about how you can remove barriers to maintaining independence.** Often little things can make a big difference in task accomplishment. For example, shirts with zippers rather than buttons can make it easier for people with arthritis to dress themselves. In addition to removing these small barriers, being aware of support services can help the elder stay in a less restrictive environment.

Consider the following basic guides to shared decision making:

- Share information, especially with distant family members.
- Include the person receiving care in discussions whenever possible.
- Have the care receiver share his/her wishes with whole family when possible.
- Find a role for a variety of family members in the caregiver network.
- Work to maintain family strengths.
- Be educated about the care receiver's health problems and share that information.

Focus on the issues by asking your family group a few simple questions:

1. What is the specific issue that needs to be addressed?
2. What are the possible solutions to that issue?
3. What else do we need to know about the issue and what resources are available to help us?
4. What are the positives and negatives of each possible solution?
5. What are the feelings and concerns that family members have about the issue?

On what other issues should I focus?

1. Enhancing the elder's continued interaction and roles
2. Allowing independence and control
3. Maintaining independence in face of dependent parents