

Say This, Not That: Better Communication with Aging Parents

Preserving dignity, connection, and autonomy through compassionate conversations.

 Preserve Autonomy Dignity and independence are central to identity.	 Avoid Defense Focus on connection over accuracy or efficiency.	 Listen First Older adults weigh choices carefully; give conversations room to breathe.
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8 Core Communication Shifts

 Handling Memory & Storytelling	 "You're repeating yourself."	 "I love hearing about this, tell me more about it."	 Prioritize connection over correcting memory mid-story.
 Discussing Living Arrangements	 "You shouldn't be living alone anymore."	 "How are you managing things around the house lately? Is there anything that feels a bit harder to do these days?"	 Ask questions to protect their independence instead of issuing a verdict.
 Offering Daily Assistance	 "Let me just do that for you."	 "Would it help if I took care of that?"	 Offer support without taking away their autonomy.
 The Driving Conversation	 "Give me your car keys."	 "How are you feeling about driving at night these days? Do you ever feel anxious behind the wheel?"	 Start a gentle dialogue about safety instead of making demands.
 Repeated Information	 "You already told me that."	 "That sounds like such a memorable experience!"	 Focus on bonding in the moment, not fixing facts.
 Frustration Around Forgetfulness	 "Why can't you remember?"	 "That's okay, it slips my mind sometimes too. Let's figure it out together."	 Show compassion and teamwork, memory loss isn't a choice.
 High-Emotion Situations	 "You're acting like a child."	 "I can see this is really frustrating for you. Help me understand what is bothering you right now."	 Validate their frustration instead of using hurtful role-reversals.
 Sharing Personal Concerns	 "You never listen to my advice."	 "I feel worried when this comes up, because I care about you and want to help."	 Use "I" statements to reduce defensiveness and show care.

You Don't Have to Carry the Weight Alone

When family conversations feel overwhelming, professional in-home care lifts the weight. Care Advantage matches your loved one with compassionate caregivers so you can focus on connection, not care logistics.

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