

Ways to Approach a Difficult Topic

TO MAKE THINGS EASIER:

SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

Avoid preconceived ideas about how your loved one will react.



“Let’s start with what is important to you.”

Listen. Don’t tell.



“Have you thought about what you want to do if you need more help?”

Let them know they are not alone.



“I know this isn’t fun to talk about. I’m going to have to do it someday, too.”

Ask questions that allow your loved one to make choices.



“Do you think you want a hand with some of the household chores?”

Allow your loved one to get angry or upset.



“This upsets me, too. But we need to discuss it.”

Leave the conversation open.



“We can talk about this later, but I want you to start thinking about it.”

Make sure all family members are heard.



“Mike, you’ve been awfully quiet. What do you think about these plans?”

End on a positive note.



“I really appreciate your willingness to talk about these difficult things.”

Do something relaxing or fun when it’s over.



Enjoy a meal, watch a favorite TV show, or do something fun that reminds everyone why you enjoy being a family.

Source: *Prepare to Care: A Planning Guide for Families*, AARP Foundation; reprinted from Hope Health Newsletter.