

Strategies for a Hard Conversation

1. Start by looking within yourself to determine what is making you feel vulnerable, anxious, angry, or resentful about this situation. Decide if it is really your own problem or something that does need to be discussed.
2. Write down all the possible motivations your loved one may have for making a particular change or accepting a boundary.
3. List the places you and your loved one feel safe together. Is it while playing cards, going for a walk, or driving somewhere?
4. Plan the best time to initiate the conversation. Is it when they first get up, over a meal, or while involved in an act that involves touch like cutting hair? Be sensitive to what is going on with your loved one. If he or she is not feeling well, or is already in a bad mood, put the conversation off.
5. Decide what language to use that gives your loved one some control over the situation or change.

Enlist the help of others:

- ♥ Create a list of people your loved one trusts. It may be a family member closer in age, a close friend, or someone from their faith community. When you approach this person, explain your concern, the best possible outcome from your point of view, and ask if they have any advice or would be willing to broach the subject with your loved one. If they don't share your concern or are uncomfortable with starting the conversation, let it go or ask someone else.