

Reasons, Respect & Relationships For Caregivers and Their Respite Providers

Reasons:

1. Why caregivers need respite provisions

a. Conventional wisdom:

Airline safety telling parents to secure their oxygen mask first before their child

Folks need a break in order to function at their best.

A job shared is a job well done – wisdom not typically applied to the respite discussion

b. Thoughts on those who seek respite:

Caregiver tended to be a generally resourceful person

Likely have reached a level of exhaustion or dysfunction

May have learned or be inherently wise about needing balance in life

c. Thoughts on those who do NOT seek respite:

Urgency or severity not acute enough

Day to day becomes so routine that need for respite is not felt

Caregiver might need to “hear” that the loved one needs the change of pace

d. Workshop participant’s thoughts:

Be sure to jot down the real wisdom shared in class ... not on this screen in red!

2. Why respite providers enjoy what they do:

a. Conventional wisdom:

Jobs where you feel you’re ‘doing good’ are rewarding

The workplace is not a cubicle!

There’s flexibility in hours

b. From an empty or full place

Empty place: Need to be needed

Full place: Naturally gifted in the areas of caring, serving and/or relating

Workshop participant’s thoughts:

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3. Why *clients need* caregivers to receive respite!

a. Practical

Recognition and opportunity to develop progressive skill set

b. Social

Variety of relationships

c. Emotional

Relief from primarily care recipient relationship with loved ones

4. Overcoming some of the true barriers:

a. Financial

Tapping into family and community resources

b. Personality Dynamics

Demanding client

Family & generational customs

c. Availability

Who do we pay these respite funds to ... where are the providers?

It's easier to do it myself (but old adage, what's easiest is not necessarily what's best!)

5. The many faces of respite – taking the idea of respite out of the box!

Respite **in** the box would be: Respite provider enters primary caregiver exits!

Respite **out of** the box:

Caregiver of spouse with Alzheimer has tea with friends in another room of house

Babysitter playing with child while Mom takes a LONG shower!

Respite provider joins family mom & siblings on an outing

Parents have candlelight dinner while care provider in another area with child



2009 Nat'l Respite Conference

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Outline with fill-ins

**Reasons, Respect & Relationships
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Respect:

1. Extinguishing stereotypes held about caregivers, clients and the respite provider:

a. Caregivers

That their children or spouses are a burden to them.

That they are barely "coping" with life

Clients

That they are unaffected by the primary caregiver's choices

That they don't have preferences or opinions

As we know, a whole workshop in itself

b. Respite Providers

They can't get other work

They're not professionals

c. Underlying attitudes as foundation for behavior/choices:

Person comes before diagnosis – in word and deed!

Respect definition: Esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person

To show regard or consideration for NUF SAID!

d. Workshop participant's thoughts:

2. Practical advice about questions and answers for both interviewer & interviewee:

- a. Setting **and** guidelines for an interview:
Professional yet comfortable
- b. General 'tricks of the trade' for any interview
Being prepared with questions that are not Y / N answers
Jot down impression immediately following interview
Looking for good old "willingness to learn"
Trust your gut!
- c. Interviewer guidelines/ideas:
Try to have time with and without the client
If possible have 1st meeting be outside your home
Provide a formatted application
- d. Interviewee guidelines/ideas:
Be professional – bring a resume
Wage focus should be on frequent reviews/raises not starting pay
- e. Workshop participant's thoughts:

3. Portraying, and listening for, healthy views and attitudes:

- a. Demeanor and nuances are not all just etiquette and/or "PC" they mean something!
The "Downs kid" doesn't chime in as respectful!
'How often do you feed her' **versus** 'When does she like her meals'
"Oh, yeah, I've worked with somebody who did that" **or** "Is he communicating something when he makes that sound?"
- b. Employer/Interviewers responsibility:
 - i. What to portray and practical ways how:
What: Respect & admiration for the client / loved one
Know what you're seeking and communicate it clearly
How: Interact with loved one during interview in positive way
Provide opportunities for loved one's gifts to shine
Have a job description
 - ii. What to listen for:
Their ability to respect
The "full or empty place"
Concrete "tools" for tough situations
- c. Respite Provider / Interviewees responsibility:
 - i. What to convey:
Be understanding but don't presume to know their feelings
You enjoy working with special needs, but their loved one is unique
 - ii. What to ask & understand:
What are your orientation procedures for new providers?
Be positive (i.e. NOT "How do you know what he wants?" BUT "What is your favorite way that he communicates?"

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Relationship:

1. Breaking down of fears:

a. Respite provider apprehensions:

Communication with client

Doing things wrong or differently

Medical procedures

b. Caregiver/family concerns:

I won't know if the respite worker can do it

It's easier to do it myself (but old adage, what's easiest is not necessarily what's best!)

That loved one will truly miss them or be scared without them there

c. Client's considerations

Truly consulting even the simplest mind, young or old on their druthers

d. Workshop participant's thoughts:

2. Treasure hunting tools for discovering gifts amidst limitations

a. 'Shoot for the moon' then glide your parachute down to a landing place

Don't err on the side of caution but offer the benefit of the doubt

b. "Signs of Intelligence" lest we forget to recognize and acknowledge

Preferences and desires

Behaviors / Manipulation

Varying abilities with different folks

Unique way of relating to acquaintances

c. Workshop participant's thoughts:

3. The good, bad and ugly of ... expectations

a. The positive 'old fashioned' side of expectations

i. Best foot forward

ii. Work ethic

iii. Trustworthiness

Not as much of "a given" as in past generations

Attitude, effort and being honorable still must be communicated

b. The trouble with expectations

They often cross over between respite provider's and client's abilities

- c. Expectations that result in disappointment

When they require another to have our same convictions

- d. The balance between hope & reality and its role in expectations

Picture, if you will, an IEP meeting!

Differences in views of loved one's abilities do not need to match – Don't push it!

- e. Workshop participant's thoughts:

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