

Activity - Practice "The Talk"

Some caregivers feel that practice sessions are valuable to "test out" the conversations in other situations. Here are some practice activities for you to try out.

- Pick one of the topics from the **Exercise – Understanding Your Parents' Needs and Preferences** that you did not have information about or information is incomplete. Have your spouse or a trusted confidant play the part of one of your parents. Use the TEMPO framework to prepare for the conversation. Take the time to talk to your "parent" thoughtfully about why having this information is important to both you and your parents. Discuss how the scenario went for both of you.
- Talk to other friends or relatives if they have had any of these conversations with their parents. Ask such questions as:
 - What's the hardest thing in getting started?
 - What happens if you don't have the information when it's needed?
 - What "techniques" worked in these conversations? What didn't?
- If your parents have a difficult time with the idea of conversations about these topics, let them know what preparations you've been doing for your family (i.e., starting a will, keeping emergency information in an important place, making plans for long-term care, etc.). Ask if they've thought about doing this. Ask if they would be willing to write down their wishes so that you and the rest of their family will be able to make decisions according to their wishes.
- If writing down their wishes does not work for them, start with gathering Emergency Information. You can start with your own emergency contact information. Show them how you have compiled this information and offer to help them start getting their information together.

[Click here to see an example of an emergency contact information sheet that you may want to use.](#)

Try to be "matter of fact" about these conversations. Let them know these conversations will help them stay in control of their future lives, even if someday, they are no longer able to communicate for themselves.