



Essential Tremor (ET)

Convincing a loved one to get help

Sometimes convincing a loved one to accept help is the toughest part of being a caregiver. Understanding the factors that contribute to resistance is the first step in meeting this challenge.

Factor: Accepting help is viewed as an admission that the individual is no longer self-sufficient or “in control.”

Possible Solution: If possible, it is best for the care receiver to be involved in the decision-making process. Have your loved one become as active as possible from the beginning such as making telephone calls or being present at interviews. This allows the person to feel more in control and make the outcome more palatable. People feel in charge of their lives when they have all of the information. When “selling” a solution, be able to provide your loved one with the facts.

For example: The limits of service or the time frame involved. How much it will cost and who will pay. How many payments (including insurance co-payments) will be handled. When the service will be available and what is required to be eligible.

When the care receiver is advanced in age or confused, it is particularly important to make changes slowly. It may be necessary to discuss the need for a service many times before the individual understands and accepts the changes. Make changes in small steps, or introduce new activities for a very short period of time at first, so the care receiver is not confused or overwhelmed by the situation.

Factor: To some people, using community services feels like the equivalent of accepting charity or “going on welfare.”

Possible Solution: Community-based services (particularly those offered at reduced fees or free of charge) are frequently funded through taxes. If this is the case, you can help the family member understand that he or she has “pre-paid” for these services, and it is not the same as accepting charity.

Factor: An obstacle to using services like home health aides can be an unwillingness to trust outsiders. Many people do not want strangers in their homes. They feel vulnerable. While only a very few have been involved in incidents of abuse involving service people or repairmen, many have heard stories of such things.

Possible Solution: Everyone has a right to their feelings and as a caregiver, it is important to acknowledge the fears your loved one may have. Instead of telling Mom that she doesn’t need to be afraid, recognize that a little fear is healthy. Explain what you have done to ensure her safety and protect her valuables, such as: performing criminal background checks on any in-home workers; only dealing with agencies that are reputable, licensed, and bonded; and getting referrals from qualified professionals. Knowing that you take Mom’s concerns seriously will help her feel more comfortable.

About this article: This article is reprinted with permission of www.caregiverslibrary.org, a nationally recognized resource that provides families with interactive care planning tools, resource locators, and helpful checklists to make caregiving easier.



Our Mission:

The IETF funds research to find the cause of essential tremor (ET) that leads to treatments and a cure, increases awareness, and provides educational materials, tools, and support for healthcare providers, the public, and those affected by ET.