



How to Ask for and Receive Help

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It may be difficult and uncomfortable to utilize the people who care about you the most. There are many reasons why you may feel hesitant:

- Fear of burdening others
- Fear of rejection
- Fear of judgement
- Fear of losing control
- Perfectionism
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of trust
- Desire for independence
- Past experiences
- Self-reliance
- Vulnerability

The truth is, most people are generally happy to help a friend or family member in need. When caring for a child with medical complexity, your focus should be on supporting the child the best that you can. Here are some ways to ask for help.

Since asking for help can be intimidating, here is a quick review of the 4 main types of communication:

1. **Passive Communication** often looks like not communicating at all due to fear. This can lead to misunderstandings.
2. **Aggressive Communication** tends to be driven by anger and judgment and can also result in inflexibility. This can create a hostile environment.
3. **Passive-Aggressive Communication** might mean you do not directly communicate your feelings, but rather hold on to negative emotions and let those affect your actions. This can cause confusion and resentment.
4. **Assertive Communication** is confident but also respectful of others' thoughts and feelings. Assertive communication creates space for honest conversations and promotes healthy connections between individuals.

It's important to ask in an assertive manner to not leave room for confusion. Be direct and to the point. Be ready to be open and honest.

Here are some examples:

"We are really struggling with _____ right now. Can you _____?"

"Could you help me by _____?"

"On _____ (day and time), we are in need of _____. Are you available?"

How to respond when others offer you help

Saying “yes”

“That would be so helpful. Thank you!”

“Thank you for your offer, here are three tangible ways you can help right now.”

Saying “no”

“I appreciate your offer, but I’m not sure that would be beneficial for us at this time.”

“That is a great idea, but this _____ would actually be more helpful right now.”

“I would love to accept your help, but don’t have the bandwidth to coordinate at this time.
Can you please reach out to _____. They are aware of our current needs.”

Self-Reflection:

What barriers do I face when asking for help?

What feeling am I having that is prohibiting me from asking for help? (anxiety, fear, sadness)

What is my typical communication style?

1. Passive
2. Aggressive
3. Passive-Aggressive
4. Assertive

How can I adapt this communication style to best ask for help?

When was the last time I asked for help?

1. Last week
2. Last month
3. Last year
4. Cannot remember

What was the outcome?

What are some specific things I could use help with? (refer to Needs Assessment - See page 28*)

What burden would those things ease? (stress, sleep, time with other children, finances)

How can I be clear in what my needs are?