

Negotiating Solutions to Workplace Problems

Tips for IHSS Providers

Remember that the work you do is important. Recipients depend on their providers. You have the right to ask your employer (the Recipient) to provide safe work conditions. When talking with your employer, you need to keep in mind that nothing is final until you have accepted it. For this reason, you should think about the proposals you can make, other options if he/she/they doesn't accept your proposals, and what would be your ultimate offer.

Prepare yourself for the discussion:

- 1) Be clear about the safety issue that concerns you.
- 2) Be clear about how the safety issue affects you.
- 3) Think about the way this safety issue negatively affects the recipient as well.
- 4) Think about various possible solutions you could propose. Make sure they are solutions that you can live with.
- 5) Consider the situation and needs of your employer or recipient. Seek to understand their issues: cultural practices, health needs, independence, safety etc.
- 6) Know what your "bottom line" is. Think about where you draw the line. What is the minimum change you need in order to feel ok about doing the task?

Present the issue to your Recipient:

STEP	Description	Example One	Example Two
ISSUE	State the issue from your point of view. "(When) I . . ."	"When I scrub the kitchen floor on my hands and knees with the sponge you prefer."	"When I transfer you from the bed to your chair."
FEELING	State how it affects you - physically and emotionally.	"My back is sore and my knees hurt. Sometimes my back continues to hurt for the next few days." "I'm afraid I will have an ongoing problem with my back."	"It causes me pain in my lower back and knees." "I feel frustrated because I am in pain when I do the other tasks you need me to do."
NEED	State your need for change and offer a possible solution.	"Can we talk about another way to clean the floors that would leave them clean as you like them, but would not hurt my back or knees?" "I've heard a long-handled mop can work well."	"Can you consider asking your doctor about some device to help with transfers and ask someone to show us how to use it properly?"

Negotiating Solutions to Workplace Problems Tips for IHSS Providers

DISCUSS	Discuss possible solutions. Listen to the points the recipient makes. Be honest but respectful when presenting your points.	"I hear you are concerned about your floor being clean. I am willing to try different mops and perhaps different cleaners until we find a way for the floor to be clean without hurting my back."	"I heard you say we should try a better way to transfer without using a mechanical device. You had a bad experience with one in the past. I am willing to learn a new way of assisting you with transfers, but would need someone to come show me how"
RESTATE SOLUTION	Repeat the final agreement to make sure you and the recipient are agreeing upon the same solution.	"Tell me if I understand correctly. We have agreed to try a long-handled mop with a cleaner you heard works well. We will try it for a month then talk again to see if we are both ok with the solution"	"Tell me if I understand correctly. We have agreed that you will schedule me to work when your physical therapist visits you. She can help us practice a new way to do transfers."

Suggestions for a negotiation:

- 1) Respect yourself!
- 2) Be respectful; speak with confidence and be calm.
- 3) Understand your rights, as well as the rights of the recipient.
- 4) Stay focused on your issue. Keep in mind your issues and the various solutions you can offer.
- 5) Listen to the recipient; try to understand their concerns and needs.
- 6) Do not make threats. Do state your "ultimate offer" or bottom line if you need to.