

Transforming a Business Negotiation Framework to Resolve Conflicts between Older Adults and Caregivers: Interests-Rights-Power

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INTRODUCTION

Family caregivers frequently facilitate, oversee, or provide direct care to their loved ones with Alzheimer’s disease (AD). Our prior research has shown that family caregivers often act as “helicopter advocates” or patient navigators, interacting with the health system for a multitude of conflicts. Family caregivers often experience frustration, anxiety, and stress as they deal with conflicts and may also lack formal training in conflict resolution.

METHODS

An interdisciplinary team, comprised of a social worker, geriatrician, business negotiation experts, and community-based family caregivers, was convened to examine current communication frameworks and applicability to three caregiver conflicts: caregiver-older adult (CA), caregiver-healthcare provider (CH), and caregiver-caregiver (CC). Caregivers provided relevant dialogue surrounding potential scenarios. Qualitative analysis (constant comparative analysis with thematic analysis) was performed by grouping the responses into the themes of the framework. Further dialogue was ascertained from the group to augment the framework matrix.

RESULTS

The caregiver panel generated the following number of responses for the conflicts: CA (n=97), CH (n=80), and CC (n=75). Thematic analysis revealed that the responses fit the Interest-Rights-Power (IRP) framework for resolving conflict. IRP framework was then applied to real-world conflicts and deemed best fit, through consensus, for characterizing negotiations for caregivers of older adults with AD.

Family caregivers lack training in conflict resolution, yet frameworks to guide negotiations in this setting are not readily available.

The IRP (Interest-Rights-Power) framework provide a means to facilitate family caregiver negotiations with older adults, providers, and other caregivers.

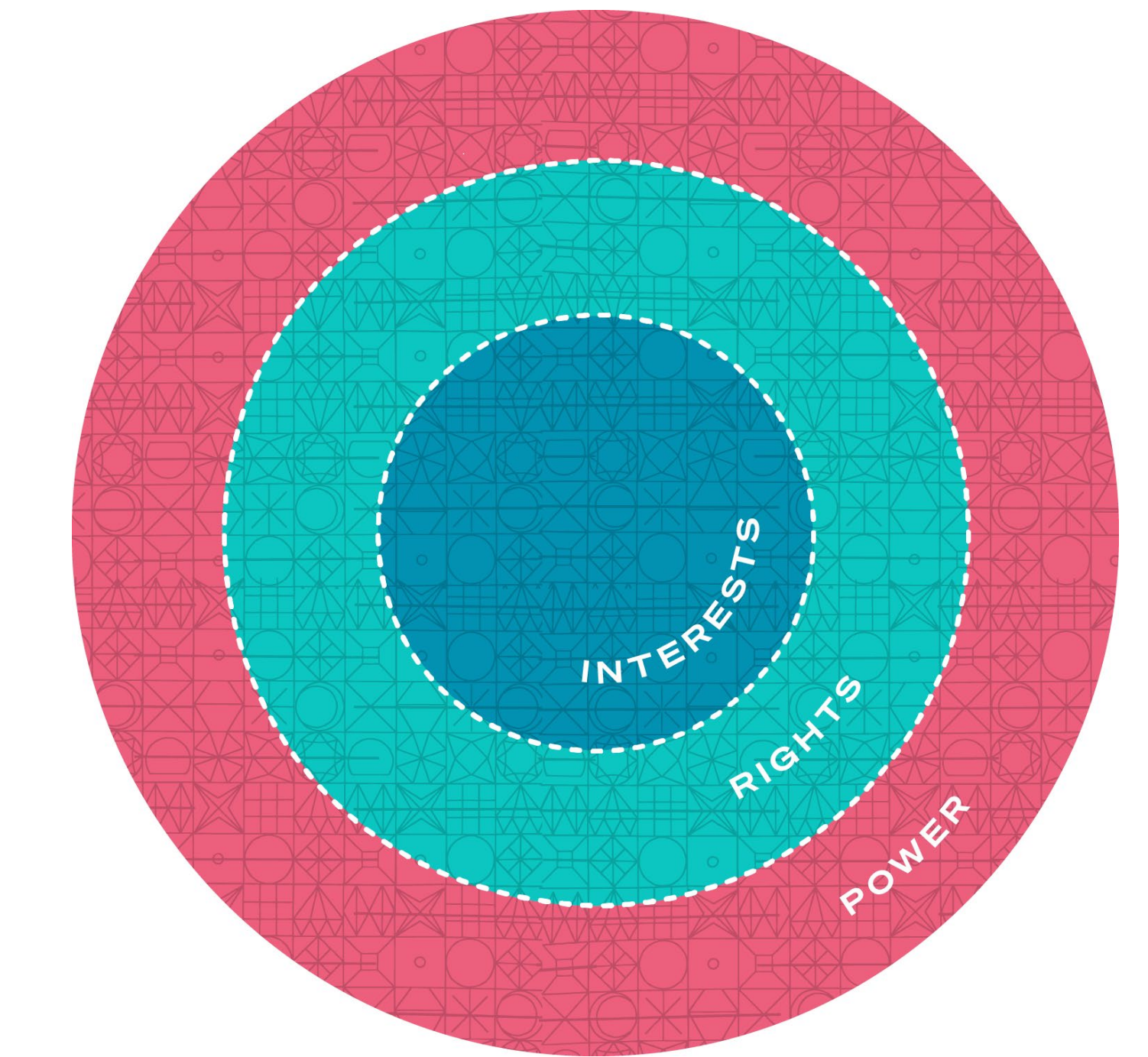
Table 1. Sample Older Adult-Caregiver Dialogue, by Type

Older Adult	IRP	Caregiver	IRP	Older Adult	IRP	Pattern
<i>I don't need any help. I'm fine!</i>	Rights	<i>We have to make sure you are safe.</i>	Rights	<i>I'm an adult, not a child.</i>	Rights	R-R-R
<i>If you keep this up, you're out of the will.</i>	Power	<i>I really think that you will see that it is helpful. Can we at least try for a few weeks?</i>	Interest	<i>We can trial it. But if it isn't working, I am going to tell you and we are going to stop.</i>	Rights	P-I-R

RESULTS (Cont.)

Dialogue was sorted into 3 types of statements that are made in a negotiation: interest, rights, and power statements. (Table 1)

- **Interest statements:** show a person’s reasoning or position in a negotiation.
- **Rights statements:** argue a person’s right or legal standing in a negotiation.
- **Power statements:** show a person’s authority over the other person in a negotiation.



DISCUSSION:

The Interests-Rights-Power (IRP) framework provides a good fit for resolving caregiver conflicts with older adults, providers, and other caregivers. The framework provides a tool to examine the IRP of the involved parties (e.g. caregivers, older adults, and providers) and determine goals, outcomes, and strategic movements to interest. Future research will examine the application of the IRP framework in the negotiation training of caregivers of older adults.

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