



Bringing Out the Best

Successful Person Centred Communication

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Communication



Language

- # Is the most unique human ability and involves complex cognitive processes.
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Old culture versus New culture

Old Culture


- Unable to communicate
- Unable to relate to what is going on
- The person is slowly but surely disappearing

New Culture


- Believe that the person is still present
 - Will search for ways to communicate
 - Seek understanding of what the person may be feeling
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An important goal of communication is to establish shared meaning.



All people living with dementia are different and will respond and react in different ways so we have to “*personalize*” our approach.

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1. Believe that communication is possible
 2. Respect time and pace
 3. Self awareness
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Person Centred Support

- # Should stress the importance of communicating on an individual basis and not become fixated on models or stages of progression.
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4 Major Themes


- # Need to know the individual
 - # Need to understand the particular experience of the progression of the person's disease
 - # Need to understand the different realities the person might be experiencing
 - # Need to respond to feelings and emotions
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Models of Communication

- # Reality orientation
 - # Reminiscence
 - # Validation
 - # Feeling based
 - # Intense listening
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What can models do?

- # Models of communication can provide:
 - Awareness
 - Guidance
 - Advocacy
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- # The following model works on the basis that all communication and behaviour experienced by people with dementia is meaningful
 - # We all need to feel valued, understood and to believe that what we communicate to others matters
 - # The skill to supporting communication is in responding to feelings and helping the person make meaningful sense of the world they are in
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One - Early Stage Experience

Use:

#Reality orientation

#Usual everyday language

#Less negative words – more positive words

#Less questions – more positive statements

#Less logic and reasoning

Early stage continued

- # Keep your style of communication the same as always
 - # Do not ask why questions
 - # Do not explore feelings until they appear ready
 - # Keep your physical distance
 - # Remain friendly but formal
 - # Watch for trauma
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Early stage continued

- # Keep established routines going
 - # When a close relationship is established and the right occasion arises work with them on their insight into experiencing dementia and the feelings it is creating
 - # Lessen the number of questions, lessen negative words and lessen logic and reason
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Two - Disorientation – feeling based experience

Use:

Validation skills

Feeling based communication

New basic skills – not usual everyday language

Feeling based continued

- # Focus on your approach, set the tone and begin conversations socially to create trust and familiarity
 - # Gain the person's attention first by using your name and their name as an introduction
 - # Exaggerate eye contact – make sure your facial expression matches your words
 - # Limit surrounding distractions
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Feeling based continued

- # Speak slowly and clearly – lower the pitch of your voice – six word sentences are ideal
 - # Give the person time to reply
 - # Demonstrate – show visibly what you are talking about
 - # Look behind the words respond to the feeling and emotions
 - # Repeat back what the person has said to you
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Transition from two to three

- # Join in the person's world and reality
 - # Do not be over focused on their words – the words are likely to have a meaning hidden to you
 - # Feel comfortable not knowing what the person's words mean
 - # Allow for flexible interpretation – you may need to think of a variety of possible meanings
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Two to three continued

- # Look for themes or similar words which regularly come up
 - # Act as the memory back to them of what they have said
 - # Value the talk for its own sake
 - # Use their words and language
 - # Help the person find meaning and familiarity in their present experience
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Three Meaningful repetitive experience

Use:

#Intense listening

#Observation

#Interpreting skills to find meaning

Meaningful repetitive continued

- # Focus on eye contact and touch
 - # Only ask simple vague questions and use ambiguity
 - # Keep focused on the person's feelings
 - # Provide periods of total quiet
 - # Use appropriate touch
 - # Find out individual responses to types of music
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Meaningful repetitive continued

- # Look for meaning in repetitive sounds, rhythms and actions
 - # Offer sensory stimulation
 - # Consider the person's needs for attachment
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Four - Late stage – intense needs experience

Use:

#Sensory communication

#Mirroring

Late stage intense needs

Try:

- #Hand tapping or repetitive movements of the hands
 - #Aromatherapy
 - #Massage – especially head (cranial) massage
 - #Singing
 - #Favourite foods
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Late stage continued


- # Laughter – create a sense of fun
 - # Warmth of the sun
 - # Holding hands and gentle talking
 - # Regular, frequent one to one contact and “being there”
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Communication tips

Facilitating the expression of feelings

- # Use broad openings
 - # Speak as equals
 - # Establish commonalities
 - # Share yourself
 - # Maintain the conversation
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- # Authenticate and motivate
 - # Connect through sensory rich-shared experience
 - # Celebrate what is possible
 - # Understand the challenge – let go of unfulfilled expectations
 - # Try to envision their world
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- # Remember, actions speak louder than words
 - 93% of meaning comes from tone, gestures and other forms of body language.

10 Validation techniques

1. Centering oneself
 2. Genuine close eye contact
 3. Clear, low, loving voice
 4. Touching
 5. Recall memories
 6. Repetition
 7. Paraphrasing
 8. Mirroring
 9. Ambiguity
 10. Naming feelings
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ABC's

- # **A**void confrontation
 - # **B**e practical
 - # **C**larify the person's feelings and offer comfort
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The ability to communicate is central to social life and the opportunity to engage in social interaction provides a powerful means for defining self, achieving self esteem and maintaining healthy relationships with others.

Person centred communication needs
to be heartfelt!



Suggested resources:

- # Keeping in Touch with Someone Who Has Alzheimer's – Jane Crisp
- # One to One – John Killick – video and handbook
- # Getting the message across
- # Talking with Jean
- # Quiz Quest
- # Hearing the Voice of People with Dementia – staff handbook, carers handbook
- # Please Give Me Back My Personality

The above are available through Dementia Services Development Centre, University of Stirling, Scotland
