Centre of Excellence

Therapeutic Recreation in Continuing Care



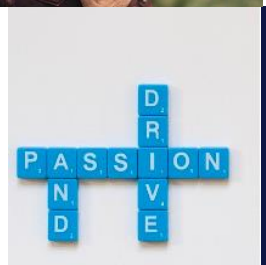




Please Understand Me:

Dementia and Communication







Sienna Caspar, PhD, CTRS

Why is communication so important in the care of people with dementia?



Effective communication skills enhance connection, reduce stress, and promote dignity and understanding during interactions with people living with dementia.

Ineffective skills produce the opposite....

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Communication

Two Types:



Verbal Communication

Non-Verbal Communication

The Importance of Non-Verbal Communication



Older adults living with dementia are often able to respond to non-verbal communication as effectively as older adults without dementia.

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Non-Verbal Communication

- Eye Contact
- Facial Expressions
- Touch
- Gestures
- Proxemics
- Spatial Position
- Body Posture
- Voice, Inflection, Tone, Volume and Rate

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Communication

A Challenge to the Communicator



Words to Avoid...

- x "DON'T"
- x "STOP"
- x "NO"
- x "CAN'T"

Rephrase Negative Statements with Positive Direction

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Communication and Connection

- Avoid speech that might be seen as patronizing to an older person (elderspeak).
- Face older adults when you speak with them, with your lips at the same level as theirs.
- Minimize background noise.
- Use visual aids such as pictures to help comprehension.
- Use visual demonstrations when verbal instruction fails.

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Communication and Connection

- Avoid speaking slowly.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Wait for an answer.
- Listen to them! Your interest in their feelings conveys respect and concern.
- Respond to the message not the word.....read their non-verbal communication.

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Communication and Connection

- Do not argue with a person who has any form of dementia.
- Offer assistance and guidance, rather than giving directives or directions.
- Do not talk about a person in front of them. Include them in the conversation even if their companion is in the room.
- Do not pretend to understand when you do not.

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Communication and Connection

- Keep promises.
- Repeat the person's last words to help them continue their thought.
- Try using touch to help convey your message.
- Be aware of the "emotional climate", the person with dementia will most likely mirror back to you what you what they feel from you.

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Validation Therapy…

“The Validation Breakthrough”
By Naomi Feil

A Brief Description

An effective procedure for interacting with a person with dementia who may be confused or agitated.

Encourages us to enter the person’s “reality”, rather than requiring them to attempt to enter our “reality”.



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Validation Therapy…

A Brief Description



People with cognitive impairment who are unable to live in the present will live (within their mind) in their past. As short term and recent memory declines, older memories (which are more deeply ingrained) become the foundation for reality.

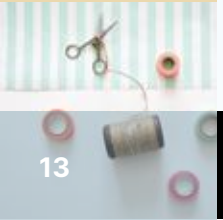
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Validation Therapy…

A Brief Description



By encouraging the person to discuss whatever it is they are concerned about, you can validate the person's thoughts, memories, experiences and concerns.



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Validation Techniques



Questioning

WHO WHAT WHEN WHERE HOW

NEVER ASK WHY.

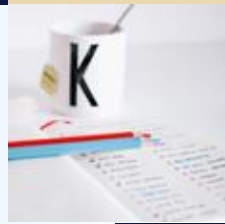
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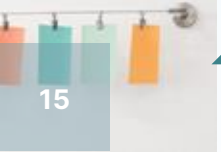
Validation Therapy…

A Brief Description

By asking the person with dementia questions (who, what, when, where and/or how), they are encouraged to discuss whatever it is that may be tugging at their consciousness.

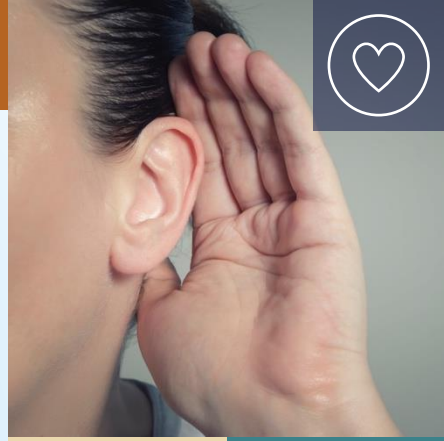






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Empathetic Listening



- When Validation is not appropriate or does not elicit the desired response, Empathetic Listening may be used.
- The “truth” behind the words can be found when the emotion is heard and responded to.

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Empathetic Listening



Utilize Active Listening Techniques

Encouraging

- *"I see...."*
- *"Uh-huh...."*
- *"That's interesting....."*

Reflecting

- *"You feel that....."*
- *"You were pretty disturbed by this..."*
- *"If I understand you, you feel this way about the situation...."*

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Listening Skills



- Evaluate Your Listening Habits
- Say Very Little--Repeat what you hear
- Remember the Goal of Listening
- Help the Speaker Feel Comfortable
- Empathize

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ONWARDS!

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Credits

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