

Communication Tips

1. Speak clearly and slowly, using simple language and short sentences.
2. Questions that only need a 'yes' or 'no' answer can make things easier – so ask 'Would you like coffee?', rather than 'What would you like to drink?'
3. Avoid testing the person's memory by, for example, asking what they did earlier
4. If what the person is saying doesn't seem to make sense, look for the meaning behind the words. They are usually trying to communicate how they feel.
5. If they can no longer talk, you may be able to understand what they are feeling through their facial expressions or gestures.
6. Your tone of voice is important. Try to talk slowly and calmly, even if the conversation is difficult or frustrating.
7. Make sure they feel heard and that their opinions are valued.
8. If they or you become frustrated, you could walk away, wait a few minutes and then go back to see if the situation has calmed down.
9. Try talking about 'we' and 'us' rather than 'you'. This makes the person with dementia feel that they are part of a team rather than being told what to do.
10. If they keep asking repeated questions, try not to get annoyed or frustrated, as this will also affect their mood.
11. Talk to others about how they tackle difficult situations to see if you can learn from them.
12. Remember the distress and confusion may be caused by health needs other than dementia.
13. Think about the environment and minimise distractions where possible.
14. Maintain good eye contact (bearing in mind cultural preferences)
15. Ask one question at a time and allow plenty of time of a response
16. Remember there are some fantastic technology aids, therapies and activities that can help aid communication E.g. The Arts

**If you have any questions or would like
more information on communication please contact:
The Dementia Team on 0203 181 0002**