

# Effective Communication For Caregivers

When Words Are Not Enough

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<https://youtu.be/mmbRJMObns>

## What Are You Thinking?

WHAT DOES THIS SMELL REMIND YOU OF?

WHAT DOES THIS SONG MAKE YOU THINK ABOUT?

WHAT MEMORIES ARE YOU HAVING???

WHAT VISUALS ARE CONJURED UP?

DOES THIS MAKE YOU HAPPY?

WRITE IT ALL DOWN

## HOW DO WE SEE OURSELVES?

- Research suggests that our self-esteem interacts with three important interpersonal needs that affect how we communicate with other people.
  - The Need For Control
  - The Need For Inclusion
  - The Need For Affection



## HOW DO YOU SEE THOSE YOU ARE CARING FOR?

HOW WE SEE OTHERS IS OUR FIRST BARRIER TO COMMUNICATION

## HOW DO YOU SEE THOSE YOU ARE CARING FOR?



## HOW DO YOU SEE THOSE YOU ARE CARING FOR?



HOW DO YOU SEE THOSE YOU ARE  
CARING FOR?



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APPROACH IS

**EVERYTHING**

HOW DO YOU  
RESPOND/REACT TO  
COMMON COMMUNICATION  
BARRIERS IN DEMENTIA?

## TERMINOLOGY

- > Expressive Aphasia: Loss of the ability to send a message
- > Receptive Aphasia: Loss of the ability to receive a message
- > Echolalia: Imitation of sounds and statements of others
- > Perseveration: Continued repetition of a sequence of movements or phrases
- > Delusion: False belief, usually fixed and not subject to change when evidence or reasoning presented to the contrary
- > Hallucination: A false sensory perception; may be a distortion in visual, auditory, smell, touch, and taste perceptions

AND THE MOTHER OF ALL THEM ALL.....

**CATASTROPHIC  
REACTION**

- <https://youtu.be/VXko5uWdPio>

## CATASTROPHIC REACTION

- Occurs when overwhelmed by stimuli
- Most commonly occurs during intimate personal care such as bathing, toileting, undressing, and/or incontinence care
- Exhibited by hitting, shouting, weeping, stubborn resistance

ALMOST ALWAYS CAUSED BY CAREGIVERS APPROACH OR REACTION

## CATASTROPHIC REACTION

- Caregiving Tips
  - Don't rush; introduce yourself & slowly progress in caregiving
  - Don't ask questions that rely on memory
  - Stay calm and be aware of your own feelings
  - Engage



The most important thing you do for someone with dementia is to get to know them as a person



## VALIDATION

- Their reality IS reality
- "Reality Orientation" is no longer appropriate
- Caregivers must meet the resident in THEIR reality
- We must adapt and respond accordingly
- Their actions reflect human needs
- Non-judgmental acceptance is the key



## BEYOND WORDS....

- Visits from loved ones decrease as the ability to communicate diminishes
- Isolation becomes increasingly prevalent as dementia progresses
- Awkward silence is commonly the cause
- Both professional and family caregivers can bridge this gap....

## CREATING MOMENTS OF JOY....

*Using the senses to communicate*

### SOUND

- Play music of their era and sing along
- Dance!
- Talk about the artist
- Talk about what was going on in their life at the time
- Late stages: Encourage foot tapping or swaying.



CREATING MOMENTS OF JOY....*Using the senses to communicate***SIGHT**

- Look at old photo albums and talk about the pictures and memories around them
- Get old postcards from a thrift shop and read what is written on them
- Late stages: Create stories about what you are looking at.

CREATING MOMENTS OF JOY....*Using the senses to communicate***HOW MANY THINGS CAN YOU SAY ABOUT THESE PICTURES**CREATING MOMENTS OF JOY....*Using the senses to communicate***HOW MANY THINGS CAN YOU SAY ABOUT THESE PICTURES**CREATING MOMENTS OF JOY....*Using the senses to communicate***HOW MANY THINGS CAN YOU SAY ABOUT THESE PICTURES**CREATING MOMENTS OF JOY....*Using the senses to communicate***SMELL/TASTE**

- Bake cookies or cook other fragrant foods
- Reminisce about special foods and aromas
- When possible share the food and experience eating while reminiscing

CREATING MOMENTS OF JOY....*Using the senses to communicate***SMELL/TOUCH**

- Especially good for communicating in later stages when active communication is no longer possible
- Themed sensory boxes (smooth, soft, rough)
- Hand massage with fragrant lotions or essential oils
- Smelling flowers or other strong scents



CREATING MOMENTS OF JOY....

*People Will Forget What You've Said....  
People Will Forget What You've Done.....  
But They Will Never Forget How You Made Them Feel...*

*Maya Angelou*

*Make Them Feel Important*

*Beth Seeds*