



WICKLOW DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Tips in Communication

To help the person with dementia understand what you are saying

- ❖ Face the person so that he/she can see you clearly; move closer if necessary.
- ❖ Make sure that you are at the same physical level, maintain good eye contact and smile.
- ❖ Speak a little more slowly; use your normal talking voice.
- ❖ Speak clearly and calmly.
- ❖ Use short simple sentences and stress the key words that provide the most information.
- ❖ Simplify questions, preferably only yes/no answers.
- ❖ If person is struggling to understand; repeat using simpler words or sentences.
- ❖ Be aware of your non-verbal communication and tone of voice. Body language should be relaxed, friendly and non-threatening.
- ❖ Use gesture and pointing when necessary to aid understanding.
- ❖ Pause briefly between phrases to give the person time to absorb information and respond
- ❖ Try not contradict or argue with the person





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To help you understand what the person with dementia is saying

- ❖ If you don't understand what the person is trying to say, look for the thread running through the conversation.
- ❖ Be aware of context of conversation.
- ❖ Respond to the feelings/emotion behind the message and reinforce with positive and reassuring non-verbal communication, e.g. if the person seems anxious try to show you are concerned.
- ❖ Don't take each word too literally; try to get the gist of what the person is trying to tell you.
- ❖ Observe and listen carefully. Look for any underlying meaning/message.
- ❖ Check your understanding as you go along, it is often possible to make guesses about what someone might mean by the person's reaction, indicating whether you are right or wrong. If you are wrong, try again.
- ❖ Avoid interrupting or correcting the person if what he/she is saying is not strictly accurate. The main focus should be on creating a positive and enjoyable experience
- ❖ Remain patient and do not rush the person

