

## ***For Families – Communicating with success with your loved one.***

*“Dementia is a shift in the way a person experiences the world around her/him.”*  
---Dr. Al Power

### **Person Directed Care**

Seeing the whole person, connecting to their heart and spirit.

### **Goals**

To enable the person to succeed and grow

To have high quality of life

To care for the whole person

To create pleasurable moments, growth, joy and wellbeing

### ***Successful approaches that create well-being and success:***

1. **Take Time to connect.** Demonstrate open, compassionate body language  
*“It’s not just what you say it is how you say it, it is not just what you do it is how you do it. What you think is what you show.”*  
Give off positive energy:
  - Light up your face. A smile or a hug speaks volumes! Our body language and tone of voice are often better understood than our words.
2. **Be authentic and genuine.**
3. **Focus your actions on creating joy and pleasurable moments.** It takes only a second to create a ‘moment’.
4. **Always help the person to be successful.** Offer choices ( *‘Today may I invite you to join me for a walk or to sit outside in the sun?’*). Speak slowly and clearly. Give time to process and make the choice. Be sensitive to language and maintaining the respect and dignity of the person always.
5. ***“Relationships trump tasks.”*** Most tasks are not critically important but maintaining trust in a relationship is.
6. **Avoid asking questions that rely on memory.** Questions such as *‘what did you have for lunch?’* or *‘do you know who I am?’* These questions create anxiety and can frustrate or embarrass the person.

Instead focus conversations on boosting self-esteem and being in the moment with the person. Offer compliments *'you look lovely today in that blue blouse, it is the perfect color for you'*. We can all agree that when we feel good about ourselves, we will have a better day!

7. **Use invitations rather than directions.** Use language that is inviting and inclusive- *'May I invite you to join me for a walk...'*
8. **Your words matter!** Use powerful, positive phrases such as: *"It's wonderful to see you!" "We are going to have so much fun!" "What if I give you a hand?" "Can I help you to freshen up?"* Avoid labels.
9. **Never force care** - Recognize cues from the person and take direction from them. Know when to stop, go, and re-approach at a later time. Forcing care breaks trust and takes away the person's power to choose and direct their own life.
10. **Avoid arguments and never correct.** Instead, enter their world and join them in their reality. Recognize and validate their feelings. If the person is looking for someone who is gone (like their mother) it is painful to experience being told that the person has died. Instead you can say something like *"It sounds like you really miss your \_\_\_\_\_. Tell me about him/her"*. This creates an opportunity for the person to spend some time with the person in memory and validates their feelings of loneliness. It is also important to include your loved one in conversations and never talk over or around them as though they are not present.
11. **Be a good detective** – “altered responses” are attempts to communicate a need. We need to find out what the need is! (physical, environmental, emotional)
12. **Be a good listener.** We need to give the person our undivided attention and unconditional positive regard. *"It is in the silence that the magic happens."* Be comfortable with silence, sometimes sitting quietly together is more meaningful to the relationship than a conversation is. Many families have experienced great joy and a wonderful close experience by lying down with their loved one. Sometimes this creates a safe place for great conversations.

