

The CARES[®] Approach

A Person-Centered Approach for Dementia Caregivers

Connect with the Person

How?

Communicate or do something meaningful with the person. Mention some piece of personal information **every time** you talk to them. For example: "Hi James, did you tell me you used to work for the post office? Weren't you a postman?" This will help put the person at ease and make your job easier.

Assess Behavior

How?

Think about **all** behavior as a form of communication. Ask yourself what it could mean. Observe the person carefully, and try to understand what they may be experiencing from his or her point of view. It may help to get input from family or other members of the care team.

Respond Appropriately

How?

Try an approach based on what you observed or "assessed." You may need to change or adjust your approach with the person several times depending on the response. Remember to maintain the connection with them. Focus on his or her strengths.

Evaluate What Works

How?

Look to see if the person responded positively. Did they smile?
Does he or she seem at ease?
If not, think about what might work better, and return to the 'Connect with the Person' step.

Share with Others

How?

Tell members of the care team, including family members, if you found something that worked well or that didn't work. For example: "I noticed that talking to James about his post office job really brought a smile to his face. He didn't even complain about getting dressed today."

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