

# Dementia Friendly Communication Strategies

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# The Challenge: Is this client cognitively impaired?

## Warning Signs

- Repetitive Questions
- Fixate on a situation and can't redirect their attention
- Memory loss
- Constantly misplaces documents you've given them
- Calls you several times and doesn't remember talking with you
- Can't follow or process the information you're sharing
- Inconsistencies
- Confused about appointments
- Poor judgement
- Change in personality
- Poor personal hygiene
- Aren't aware of their limitations

# Communication Pitfalls

## **AVOID:**

- Arguing, rationalizing, correcting, explaining
- Being forceful or insistent
- Reminding them they forget
- Rushing them
- Distractions

# C.A.L.M. © Dementia Communication Tips

## C = Compassionate Communication

- Pay attention to body language
- Speak slower
- Give them time to respond
- Make eye contact
- Provide verbal and visual cues

# C.A.L.M. © Dementia Communication Tips

## A = Ask Clarifying Questions

- Are there any concerns or anything specific you want me to be aware of?
- Is there anything I can help you with that is difficult or frustrating for you?
- What are your wishes and goals?
- Can you elaborate or tell me more about...?
- Who have you talked to about making this decision?

# C.A.L.M. © Dementia Communication Tips

## L = Listen – What are they telling you?

- Acknowledge/identify the clients fears, concerns, wishes, frustrations
- Listen to what the client tells you – who & what is important to them and why?
- Are they worried? Concerned? Frustrated? Angry?
- What does the client think they need?
- Document – write down their responses and your observations

# C.A.L.M. © Dementia Communication Tips

## **M = Meet Them Where They Are**

- Thank you for sharing this information with me
- I'm sorry this has been a "difficult"/ "hard" time for you
- Let me review what we have discussed, and I'll get back to you
- Let me see what I can do to create a plan that takes into consideration your concerns, needs, goals and wishes
- Who would be a good person(s) for me to contact if I have any concerns, questions or if I need additional information or clarification?



# Summary:

## Dementia Communication Goals

- Listen
- Ask clarifying questions
- Acknowledge
- Speak slower
- Give them time to respond
- Make eye contact
- Document

# Questions? Comments?



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