

Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU... CARING FOR OTHERS”

Being Heard and Being Understood

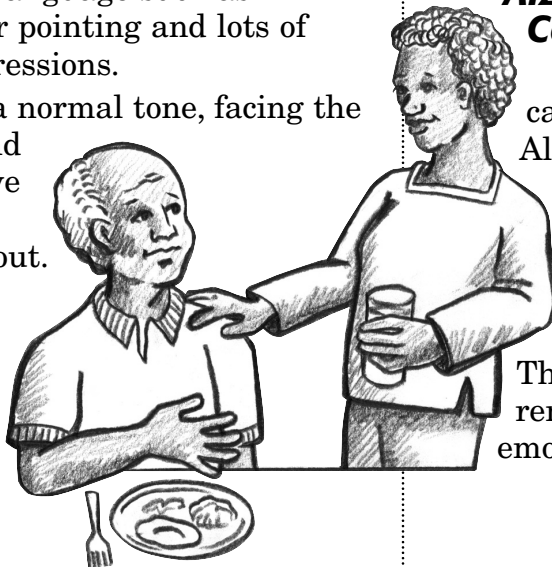
Making Conversations Easier

When you talk to the person in your care, do they understand you? Do you understand them? No matter how difficult it can sometimes be to communicate, don't give up hope. A few simple techniques can help.

Talking to Someone Who Is Hard of Hearing

Loss of hearing can make people seem slow or not interested. Often, however, they simply can't hear what others are saying. They may not have their hearing aid turned up. To make sure you can be heard:

- ◆ Stand, sit, or squat so you are at eye level with the person.
- ◆ Make sure your face is in the light so that your lips and facial expressions can be seen.
- ◆ Use simple sentences. For example, “Do you want to eat?”
- ◆ Use body language such as nodding or pointing and lots of facial expressions.
- ◆ Speak in a normal tone, facing the person, and making eye contact. Do not shout.



Tip: Alzheimer's Care—Use Body Language

Because verbal skills are diminished, body language become even more important. Use your hands to “talk.” Tap the seat of a chair to show where to sit, touch a shoulder to show you arrived, shake hands to show friendship, etc.



Source: Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer's Care; Bell & Troxel; Health Professions Press; © 1997

Alzheimer's Communication

Learning how to communicate with someone with Alzheimer's is very important. Sometimes they have their own reality, so do not try to reason with them. If you always remain calm, you can keep them calm, too. The most important thing to remember is respond to their emotions—not to their behavior.

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Being Heard and Being Understood

To improve your chances of being understood:

- ◆ **Reduce background noise.** (Loud noises can actually cause pain to someone with Alzheimer's.)
- ◆ **Address the person by name** and remind him or her of your name.
- ◆ **Explain what you are going to do** before you do it using one-step commands. Point to the object you are discussing. For example, say, "Do you want your sweater?" not "Do you want this?"
- ◆ **Avoid expressions that may cause confusion.** Don't say, "Jump into the shower" Instead, say, "Step into the shower."

Most Important of All—Maintain a Calm Atmosphere

People with Alzheimer's do best when they are in a calm place. Television programs should be quiet and non-violent, only caffeine-free beverages should be served, and family arguments should be avoided.

To maintain a calm atmosphere—

- **Develop a consistent routine** of care or assistance.
- **Be sensitive to changing moods** and do not take them personally.
- **Use humor.**
- **Do not argue**, enter his or her reality and give them reassurance and comfort and agree with their statements.



I D E A E X C H A N G E

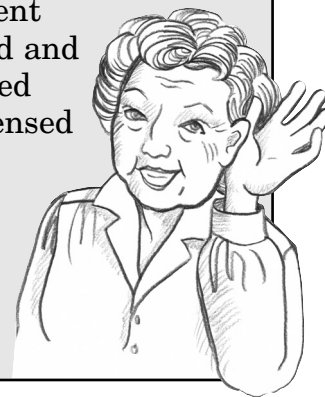
How would you manage this?

Question: I cannot convince the family that the person in my care needs a hearing aid. How can I show them that she may benefit from a hearing aid?

Answer: You can watch for some of these signs of hearing loss and point them out to the family:

- The TV and radio is always on very loud
- You have to repeat yourself several times to be heard.
- What you say is often misunderstood.

People who have a serious hearing loss may also withdraw from others out of embarrassment and become isolated and depressed. A certified audiologist or a licensed hearing aid dealer is qualified to recommend a hearing aid.



Note Be aware that a person who is unable to describe what he wants may get very excited. When this happens, ask obvious questions first to find out what the need might be.

Feeling Good About Yourself

Stepping Stones to Change

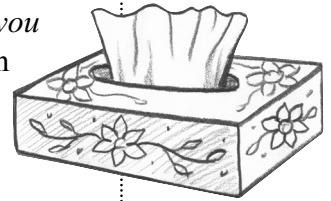
We all say we want to change our negative behavior, but don't take the steps to make concrete changes. When we keep doing things the same way, we keep getting the same results.

Simple changes can mean big results:

- Give Compliments—don't save your compliments for big things and favorite people. "Catch" people doing a good job.
- Smile Often—smile especially when you see someone struggling with a task. A smile is an expression of esteem.
- Catch Your Negative Thinking—Wear a rubber band around your wrist for one week. Whenever you find yourself thinking unkind or ungrateful thoughts, snap the rubber band.
- Replace Critical Statements—Show your support and acceptance of the people in your life as they are, not as you wish they could be.

Flu Season is Here Again

Be sure both you and the person in your care get a flu vaccination.



Inspiration

"Life can be wildly tragic at times and I've had my share. But whatever happens to you, you have to keep a slightly comic attitude. In the final analysis, don't forget to laugh."

Katherine Hepburn

Live Life Laughing!

Windy, ain't it?

No, It's Thursday.

So am I. Let's have a drink.



Tip Before starting a conversation, announce what you are going to talk about. For example, say, "Henry, let's talk about going out for a walk." When you change the subject, say so—for example, "Henry, now let's talk about eating dinner."

Our Purpose

To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride and competence.

Ordering Info

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For the Caregiver

Slimmer & Healthier

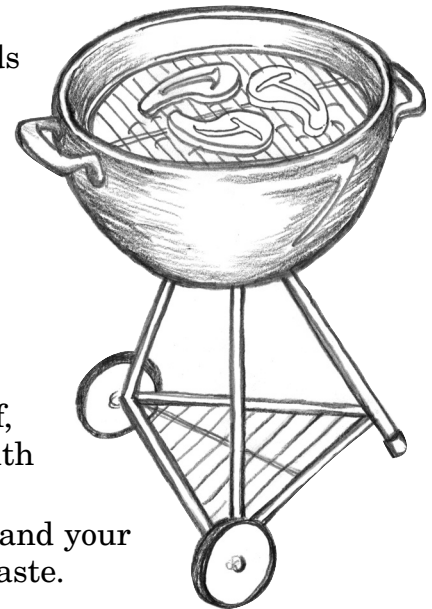
Tricks for Reducing the Fat

No need to give up all your favorite foods to lose weight. You can change some ingredients and cut calories without losing the good taste.

- Use cooking spray for frying instead of butter and oil.
- Grill or broil meat so the fat drips off.
- Sauté vegetables in fat-free broth rather than oil.
- Reduce the sugar in a recipe by one half, or better yet, substitute all the sugar with mashed bananas or prune puree.

Make these changes gradually and you and your family will not even notice the change in taste.

Source: Mayo Clinics Women's HealthSource; August 2004.



NEXT ISSUE...ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA CARE ACTIVITIES!

Caregiver Assistance News

“C A R I N G F O R Y O U ... C A R I N G F O R O T H E R S ”

Q U I C K Q U I Z

It can be difficult to communicate with a senior or a person with Alzheimer's. Think about how you can understand and be better understood by using some of the suggestions learned.

1. Using body language can help you communicate with the person in your care.
T F
2. It helps for a person to hear you if you shout.
T F
3. We can send an unkind message to someone through words and mannerisms.
T F
4. In Alzheimer's care, use of body language makes communication clearer.
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5. People with Alzheimer's live in their own world. Sometimes you have to agree with what they are saying and "play along."
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6. If a person is hard of hearing, make sure his or her hearing aid is in and turned up before talking.
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7. It can disturb a person with Alzheimer's if the TV is tuned to a violent show.
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8. It is helpful to announce what you are going to talk about before starting a conversation.
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9. A simple loss of hearing can make a person seem slow and uninterested.
T F
10. When a person is frustrated by not being able to describe what he wants, he may do things like banging on furniture.
T F



Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____