



DEMENTIA PROJECT

COMMUNICATION IDEALS

THE LANGUAGE OF DIGNITY

Trudy Bower

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NHS
Somerset

BU
Bournemouth
University

Introduction

Just try to imagine for a moment you are in a place that you don't recognise, there are people around you but you don't know them, these strangers are talking to you, but you can't talk back your words are stuck, you are unable to speak, the few words that come out of your mouth are jumbled up. You're frightened, scared and lonely. This is how it sometimes feels when you have Dementia even the normal every day things are unrecognisable, you're being asked do you want a cup of tea (tea) do you eat this or drink this, you're not sure, sugar do you take sugar, tea, sugar, what are these people on about. Now you're being asked do you need the toilet, they are standing you up and leading you to a small room, but you don't know where you're to, this stranger then says here we are, here's the toilet let me help you, they start to pull at your cloths, what are they doing, you're panicking, you want to say leave me alone, I can do that, but your words won't come out, where's my mum I am safe when I think of my mum and dad.

Communication

Problems with communication, memory, awareness, sense of time etc are all part of Dementia.

When people can't remember, they can't stay reassured, so when you are talking with someone with Dementia you need to provide the reassurance:

- * With words
- * By showing them what they need to see
- * By communicating with your gestures
- * By your tone of voice
- * By giving them extra time
- * By finding out their interests
- * By listening to the same thing several times

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

Don't Say

- * What did you have for lunch today?
- * What did you do today?
- * Is that a new skirt/trousers?
- * Who is that sitting over there?
- * Do you know who I am?
- * You just told me that.
- * I already know that.
- * What kind of music do you like?
- * We talked about this a moment ago.
- * I just explained that.
- * Do you want to watch (Coronation Street)?
- * I don't understand why you say things like that.
- * How many times have you walked up and down today?
- * Stop doing that.
- * You asked me that already!
- * You know I can't do that.

Do Say

- * How was lunch today?
- * How are you?
- * What a nice jumper. I don't remember it.
- * That person looks nice. Let's go and meet him/her
- * Hi, I'm glad to see you
- * That's interesting; I didn't know that.
- * Thanks for telling me
- * Would you like to listen to some music?
- * Let me show you
- * I'm not sure I got that. Could you explain it again?
- * You look comfortable. Can I join you?
- * Looks like you're enjoying your walk. Can I join you?
- * That's an interesting question. I hadn't thought about it before.
- * I really don't know what do you think?
- * I wish I could, but I can't
- * I'd really like to stretch my legs. Would you like to join me?

THINGS A DEMENTIA PATIENT MAY SAY OR ASK

Their Question

- Please take me home

- I want to call my parents so they can pick me up”.

- I need to get out of here; is that the door?

- Do I know you?

- Who are you

Your Answer

I wish I could, but you need to stay here today.

(Don't tell the Dementia patient their parents have died, this would make them suffer the shock of grief and loss all over again) your reply:

- Your parents really loved you didn't they?
- Tell me about them

Let's go for a walk to see”, (when you're walking change the conversation to help them think of something else)

- No, we haven't met before, but it's nice to meet you.
- We only met once, but we didn't get a chance to talk, it's nice to have the chance now.

Tell them your name and that you are a (nurse)

Of DIGNITY DO'S AND DON'TS

Their Questions

- I don't know what's happening to me. I can't seem to remember anything

- I don't know what to do: I don't have any money with me".

- Please help me. Can someone please help me?

- Are you going to be here tonight?

Your Answer

Acknowledge that it's scary to not remember anything but tell them:

- You'll think of it later.
- Let's do something else for a while.
- Our memories play tricks with us: my memory plays tricks with me sometimes

- Everything here is paid for already, so you have nothing to worry about.
- It's all paid for, isn't that great?

- Can I help you?
- Tell me what has upset you?
- Would you like me to sit here with you?

- No but I am going to be here for a while

Do's and don'ts

Do's

- * Do say, Thank you for telling me.
- * Do say, what a nice colour your jumper is
- * Do say, it's nice to see you
- * Do say, I really enjoyed talking with you
- * Do ask if they want to watch some television
- * Do say, do you want to see what's going on over there
- * Do say, I'm going to have a little walk, would you like to come with me?
- * Do be patient
- * Do let them be the host/hostess
- * Do let them talk
- * Do show respect

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By showing them what they need to see

By communicating in your gestures

By your tone of voice

By giving them extra time

By finding out interests of theirs

By listening to the same thing several times