

# Communicating with People with Dementia

## COMMON CHALLENGES

**WORD FINDING:** knowing what the word is and not being able to remember it

**DELAY IN RESPONDING:** needing more time to process incoming information before being able to respond

**WORD SALAD:** stringing words together that have no meaning

**REPEATING WORDS OR PHRASES:** getting stuck and repeating the same thing over and over

**TOPIC INSISTENCE:** repetition of a topic



**LANGUAGE SKILLS CAN VARY WITH EACH PERSON WHO HAS DEMENTIA**

## HELPFUL TIPS

**MAKE EYE CONTACT:** try to be at their level so they can focus on you

**SHOW RESPECT:** identify yourself to them

**TOUCH:** a hand on their arm gets attention or conveys interest

**ALLOW RESPONSE TIME:** don't rush or answer for them

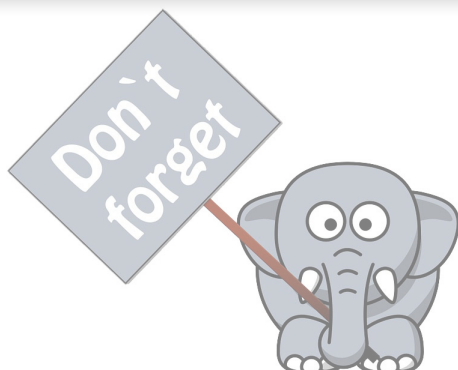
**OBSERVE BODY LANGUAGE:** even distressing behaviors are a type of communication; try to determine what the person needs

**LOOK FOR EMOTIONS BEHIND WORDS:** emotions remain intact even when language fails

**BE SENSITIVE ABOUT TELLING BAD NEWS:** choose carefully if the truth or a therapeutic fib is the most respectful for the person



**AS PEOPLE LOSE THE ABILITY TO USE NOUNS AND WORDS EFFECTIVELY, THEY BECOME MORE AWARE OF OTHERS' FEELINGS AND MOODS.**



## GENERAL REMINDERS

Reduce distractions

Use short sentences that include only one thought

Repeat information as needed

Never argue or confront

Do not use open-ended questions

Remain calm

Be patient with yourself