



COMMUNICATION CONNECTION

Enhancing the quality of life of the older adult and supporting their friends, families and caregivers.

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www.connectionsincommunication.com

WALKING THE JOURNEY: CREATING MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

What is one of the greatest gifts we can give a person who is experiencing a change in their ability to participate in daily activities?

Learning how to help them maintain involvement in activities that are meaningful to them is one of the ways to help them enjoy a quality of life.

Here is some basic information to get you started.

If you are interested in a private consultation, training for staff or caregivers, activity resources and modification ideas, please contact me at kathy@connectionincommunication.com

Visit www.connectionsincommunication.com for activity ideas and sample worksheets from all of my products.

1. Meet them where they are. It is important to know their interests, learn more about what they have for strengths. Once that has been determined it is possible to modify the activities they enjoy the most to the appropriate level to increase participation and decrease their frustration. EXAMPLE: A person who enjoyed reading books can no longer concentrate or recall the information. Try shorter stories that appeal to them or magazines and catalogs of interest.
2. Share what works with the person with Alzheimer's disease for the benefit of staff members, friends, and family members. Each person has a different connection with the individual and if there is a successful activity or communication strategy, it is important to let others know what might work.
3. Remember that it is always important to follow some of the basic communication tips that enhance communication with a memory impaired older adult. Helpful tips include simplifying the presentation of the information, getting rid of distractions, and slowing the overall pace of the conversation.
4. If they have a hearing loss, it is important to follow good communication tips to maximize their ability to hear the information.

5. Activities are everywhere. It is often the simple things that can be the most meaningful. Take some time to just BE with them rather than rush from one activity to another.

6. Some activity suggestions:

- Create a photo album with favorite pictures. Put a simple story next to the picture or on the next page in large print since often they can read aloud less complex sentences. Then when they can no longer easily share their story, a visitor can talk about what is happening with the information already provided.
- Record favorite TV shows, movies or special events to create a library of options when the person with Alzheimer's disease has visitors. Find some travel videos or collect some of their old movie favorites. Watch family videos together. If they cannot tell the story, offer them yes/no questions, two word choices or tell their story for them.
- Go to the library or a local bookstore and get tapes of old radio shows they may have enjoyed.
- Read a story to them and tape record it so they can listen to it again. This is a great suggestion for families out of town or an idea for grandchildren to send to their grandparents.
- If they had a favorite game such as checkers or cards and are having difficulty playing it, do it in teams or coach them when it is their turn.
- Use simpler puzzle books if they are having trouble with the ones they used to do. Enlarge the pages if needed or get books with larger print. Solve them together. Avoid childlike materials.
- Keep picture books around about things they enjoyed – sports, cooking, gardening, old cars, travel, history, flowers etc. Leave them in a place where they are likely to pick them up.
- Old magazines, Norman Rockwell picture books, books that have pictures reviewing the century are excellent resources for conversation starters.

The sense that someone else cares always helps because it is the sense of love. GEORGE WOODBERRY