

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

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REFLECTION

I have always appreciated the 37 years of working as a speech and language pathologist primarily with homebound older adults.

It continues to be a privilege to enter their homes, learn their stories, address their needs and support their families as they adjust to the numerous communication challenges that have impacted all of their lives.

Little did I know that I would get to apply almost everything I learned with my mother as she experienced significant changes in her abilities to communicate. A very smart woman with great pride in her verbal and written skills (and the proofreader of all but my last two products), she became extremely frustrated and in the process was a great teacher.

Mom showed me on a regular basis how to fine tune my strategies to address her hearing, vision and memory difficulties. Then I learned step by step the best way to stay connected by modifying some of her favorite activities as her capabilities changed so as to maximize her daily experiences.

For ideas that might work for you, please visit our website. Share your ideas with others.. we are all in this together.

Managing the Roadblocks to Communication

Whether you are the child of an older adult, a friend, a caregiver, a health care professional, an emergency responder, a business that uses seniors as volunteers or has older adult customers, there are tips and strategies that can help you to maximize your communication and connection with them. Many of them are common sense but it is in the busyness of our lives that we often forget to implement the most appropriate techniques. Take that extra moment to pay attention to what it is that *you* can do to enhance the moment. For additional suggestions, refer to the website or consider a training program for your staff, employees or caregiver group.

When hearing is a problem

1. Face the person. Make sure you are at their eye level if they are seated. Do not talk with your back to them as you are leaving the room.
2. Speak your words distinctly.
3. Slow down the rate at which you present information.
4. Eliminate background noises and any distractions.
5. Ask them what *you* could do to make it easier for them to hear you better.

When vision is a problem

1. Make sure there is sufficient light. Adequate lighting is important for maximizing their safety and reducing falls.
2. Be sensitive to the size of the printed information you present to them.
3. If your writing is not easy to read, consider printing the information.
4. If there are significant visual limitations, do not move their things without permission.
5. If their hearing is good and they miss being able to read, try books on tape.

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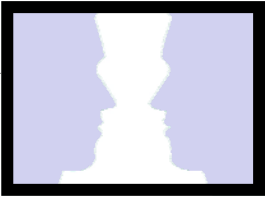
and

MEMORY FITNESS MATTERS

www.memoryfitnessmatters.com

Check websites for training programs, products, articles, resources, previous newsletters, activity and communication strategies, interviews and much more. Thanks for all that each of you do to enhance the quality of life of older adults.





COMMUNICATION CONNECTION

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

A family with an old person in it possesses a jewel.

CHINESE SAYING

Across the Miles

If you are a long distance caregiver and would like tips on how to enhance communication or how to stay connected, visit our website for ideas or information on our personalized programs.

IDEAS

If your loved one has a hearing problem, you might consider a phone with amplification. If they are wearing hearing aids, it may be helpful to use the speakerphone option. If they are in the hospital, rehab or perhaps visiting others for a period of time, consider taking along their special phone. If they are able to handle electronic devices, perhaps a fax machine would be helpful.

Consider our training programs for

- _ ALL staff including special programs for nursing assistants, activity professionals and your volunteers.
- _ Families and caregivers

When memory is a problem

1. Slow down your rate of presentation and monitor it as you continue to speak. Please encourage them to let you know if you need to slow down.
2. Reduce the complexity of the message.
3. Reduce any distractions — background noises, radio or television as well as telephone conversations make it harder for them to concentrate and can increase their frustration level very quickly.
4. Verify the information to make sure that your message is being understood.
5. Write down the information so they can refer to it. Make sure it is legible and large enough so they can easily read it.
6. Keep their routine and schedule less hectic. Frequently there can be increased agitation when life around them is too busy! Look for any signs that they are on overload or fatigued so you can anticipate the need to modify the activity or environment.

REALTOR AND EMS PROGRAMS

ENHANCING COMMUNICATION WITH THE OLDER ADULT

In the State of Ohio we are able to provide continuing education for several special audiences.

Would you like realtors to visit your facility?

Consider sponsoring a 3 hr CEU program filled with practical tips for communication as well as ways they can incorporate those suggestions into a marketing plan.

Would you like to give back to the emergency responders in your area?

Consider sponsoring a 1– 2 – 3 hour geriatric training program.

SUMMER ACTIVITY IDEAS

- _ Visit a local farmer’s market. Enjoy some of their favorite produce. Share stories about gardening and family traditions.
- _ Sit in the park and watch the children play, people walking dogs, feed the ducks and reminisce about childhood memories.
- _ Gaze at the stars, visit the zoo or a local historical site, go to the lake or the beach, go fishing.
- _ When a loved one is less able to do some of their favorite things, simplify the activity or reminisce with them. If they are unable to tell their story then share *your* memories of those special times!

PRODUCTS

FOR ACTIVITY PROFESSIONALS and SPEECH & LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

Entire catalog available on website
www.connectionsincommunication.com

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## **IDEAS IDEAS IDEAS!!**

- **Things to do when visiting**
- **Conversation starters**
- **Puzzles for each decade**
- **Reminiscence ideas for all ages**
- **Connecting grandparents and grandchildren**

Remember that families appreciate ideas of ways to enhance the time spent with loved ones. Share the website links with them.

If you want a catalog of all of the available products, please send an email to [kathy @connectionsincommunication.com](mailto:kathy@connectionsincommunication.com)