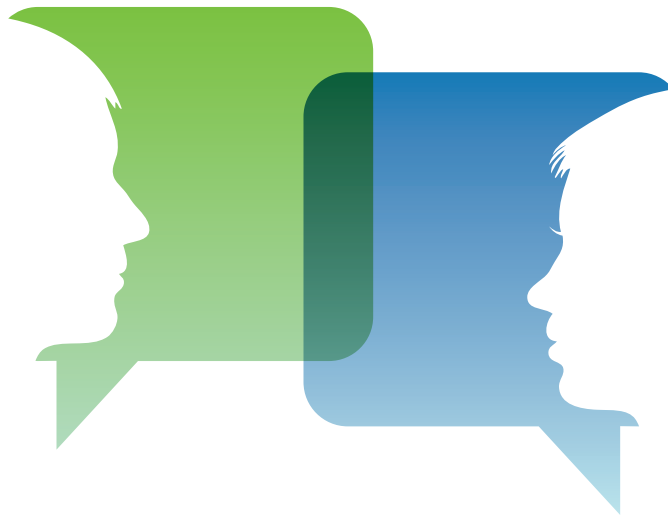


COMMUNICATION TIPS AT MEMORY CAFÉS



1. Use positive, friendly body language:

People with dementia may not fully understand the details of what you are saying, but they will pick up on your body language. If you are visibly stressed, annoyed, or upset, someone with dementia may become distrustful or think something is wrong. However, if you are smiling and cheerful, people with dementia are more likely to feel relaxed and enjoy the memory café.

2. Be patient:

People with dementia often lose their short-term memory. When interacting with people with dementia, you may find yourself repeating the same information over and over or being asked the same question over and over. Even if you have already answered the same question five times, to the person with dementia, it is always the first time they are hearing that information. Always repeat information with the same cheerfulness and patience no matter how many times you have repeated yourself.

3. Go with the flow:

People with dementia may say or do things that don't make sense to you. For example, someone with dementia may say that her father is coming home from work soon. Other times, they may be doing an activity "incorrectly" but still enjoying the activity. As long as the person with dementia is not in danger of hurting themselves or someone else, it's important to avoid arguing or correcting and just go with the flow.

4. Speak slowly and clearly:

Slow down and enunciate. You don't have to shout, but you should speak loudly and avoid mumbling. If you have a higher-pitched voice, it may help to lower the pitch of your voice. Give people with dementia 20 seconds to process what you said.

5. Provide immediate reassurance:

People with dementia may become upset or embarrassed if they think they are doing something wrong. They may become upset or embarrassed if they drop or spill something. Always provide immediate reassurance to them in that moment. For example, if someone with dementia spills their drink, instead of looking annoyed, smile and say "that's okay I'll go get you a new drink."