

Communication and connection

Community care workers, family and partner carers and friends of people with dementia, stroke and coronary heart disease may find this Fact Sheet useful. It gives some ideas to help better communicate and connect with a person living with dementia.

- Keep sentences short and simple.
- Face the person at eye level.
- Be calm, talk in a gentle, matter-of-fact way.
- Leave plenty of time for the person to understand what you say and to answer you.
- Don't interrupt when the person is speaking.
- Give the person time to come up with a word or thought.
- Avoid competing noises; turn off the TV or radio or turn down the volume.
- Don't order the person around or argue.
- Ask people to join in rather than telling them to do things.
- Use orienting names when you can, such as 'Your son John'.
- Stay still when talking to the person so they can see you.
- Respect the person's rights and wishes. People with dementia can still speak for themselves.
- Think about the person's literacy level when giving them written information.
- Think about using an interpreter, if this might be helpful.
- If the person has not understood what has been said, try repeating it using different words.
- Don't take the person's response or behaviour personally.
- Make time to talk the person through issues that arise.
- Validate the person's experiences.