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Techniques for Successful Dementia Care Interactions

Quiz Time!
- What do we know?
- What do we think we know?
- What don't we know?
- What surprised us most?
- What can we do about it?

Question #1
Dementia and Alzheimer's are two different words for the same condition
   a. True
   b. False
   c. I don't know
Better Answer:

Having dementia does not equal and is more than just Alzheimers does not equal and is more than just Memory Problems
Question #2

About how many types, forms, or causes of dementia are there?

a. 2-3  
b. 5-10  
c. 20-40  
d. Over 100  
e. I have no idea
Question #3

What is one of the most common losses of ability someone will experience when they get any form of dementia?

a. Loss of ability to hear sound
b. Loss of ability to recognize familiar voices as familiar
c. Inability to know another person is upset by noticing their tone of voice
d. Loss of formal language skills – vocabulary, comprehension, speech production
e. I have no idea
Question #4
What is the how much of your brain tissue will you typically lose by the end of the condition?

a. About 95%
b. About 65%
c. About 50%
d. About 30%
e. I don’t know

For all that is lost, some remains!

• 1/3 of brain remains
• Know what still works
• Know how we support in areas of loss
Sensory Strip
Motor Strip
White Matter
Connections
BIG CHANGES

Automatic Speech
Rhythm – Music
Expletives
PRESERVED

Formal Speech
and Language
Center
HUGE CHANGES

Executive
Control
Center:
Emotions
Behavior
Judgment
Reasoning

Learning and
Memory
Center:
Hippocampus:
BIG CHANGE
Question #5

What is the first change with dementia?

a. The brain begins to shrink  
b. The chemistry of the brain changes  
c. The person’s personality changes  
d. The person’s behavior changes  
e. I don’t know
Four Truths About Dementia:

1. At least 2 parts of the brain are dying - one related to memory and another part
2. It is chronic – can’t be fixed
3. It is progressive – it gets worse
4. It is terminal – it will kill, eventually

Question #6

What is it called when you have dementia and continue to think you are as skilled as you were before, even though you are making mistakes now?

a. Anosognosia
b. Denial
c. Hippocampal damage
d. Confabulation
e. I really don’t know
Positron Emission Tomography (PET)
Alzheimers Disease Progression vs. Normal Brains

INTENT
I'm sorry I was trying to help

EMOTION
I'm sorry I made you angry
I'm sorry I disappointed you

THAT HAPPENED
I'm sorry it should NOT have happened

INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY
I'm sorry, I had no right to make you feel that way

I'm sorry, this hurt I hate it for you

Question #7
What is an effective treatment for dementia?

a. How we connect and respond to people who are living with the condition
b. There are pills people can take to slow the disease down
c. There is nothing that really helps
d. Exercise and eating right keeps it from getting worse
e. I don't know
**Beliefs:**

People living with dementia are doing the best they can
We must learn to dance with our partner
What we choose to do matters
We are a key to making life worth living
We must be willing to change ourselves

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**How Can We Become Better Care Partners?**

- Let go of the past to be in the moment
- Go with their flow
- Be willing to try something new
- Be willing to learn something different
- Be willing to see it through another’s eyes
- Be willing to fail and try again
- Be a detective, not a judge
- Match your help to their remaining abilities
- Look, listen, offer, think

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**Some Basic Skills:**

1. Positive Physical Approach™
2. Hand-under-Hand® for connection and assistance
3. Supportive Communication
1. Positive Physical Approach™:
- Pause at edge of public space (6 feet)
- Gesture and greet by name
- Offer your hand and make eye contact
- Approach slowly within visual range
- Shake hands and then maintain Hand-under-Hand®
- Move to the side
- Get to eye level and respect intimate space
- Wait for acknowledgement

A Positive Approach
(To the Tune of Amazing Grace)
Come from the front
Go slow
Get to the side,
Get low
Offer your hand
Call out the name, then wait…
If you will try, then you will see
How different life can be.
For those you’re caring for!

2. Hand-under-Hand®:
Protects aging, thin, fragile, forearm skin
3. Supportive Communication

- Repeat a few of their words with a question at the end
- Avoid confrontational questions
- Use just a few words
- Go slow
- Use examples
- Fill in the blanks
- Listen, then offer empathy: “Sounds like...” or “Seems like...” or “Looks like...”

Connect Emotionally:

- Offer your name: “I’m (name) and you are...?”
- Offer a shared background: “I’m from (place) and you’re from...?”
- Offer a positive personal comment: “You look great in that!” or “I love that color on you.”
- Make a positive observation: “What beautiful flowers!” or “Great photo!”

Then, Get it Going!

- Give Simple and short information
- Offer concrete choices
- Ask for help
- Ask the person just to try
- Break the task down to single steps at a time
Question #8
Which message would you prefer if you had dementia?

a. You seem incompetent, let me help you
b. I am glad to see you. I could use your help.
c. There is clearly something wrong with you and I don’t know what to do
d. You are scaring me and I want you out of here
e. There is clearly something wrong with you and I am going to call the authorities for help