

Connecting the Dots:

Helping families make sense of Alzheimer's Dementia

My mom gets so embarrassed when she has an accident.
How do I help her without making her feel worse?

My dad doesn't remember me anymore. Why should I even visit? It's a waste of time. I am so sad.

Every time I walk up to my mother to take her to the bathroom, she refuses.

Whether he's sick at the hospital or staying with me, my dad ask to go home. He gets very angry when I tell him he lives with me. He wants to go home now.

How do I have a pleasant visit with my mom? She has dementia and our visits don't go very well.

What's a better way to talk about my father than calling him "combative" like his doctor does?

Health Literacy:

One of our tasks as Healthcare Professionals is to communicate key concepts to healthcare consumers in plain language and ways that are immediately relevant to their lives. We don't use clinical words in our explanations and answers. Instead, we empower with understanding.

Sometimes it helps to just let them hear your voice, see a picture of you as a child, or talk together about yourself by name.

Upon arrival, introduce yourself by your first name and tell them you brought them a gift.

"The church ladies made supper for us!"

Don't ask your loved one if they want to go here or there. Simply offer your hand and invite them with gestures and words to walk with you.

Tell a story about an experience you shared together... without asking whether they remember it too.

Reflect on the ways they loved you when you were sick and choose one of those ways of showing love to try... warm wash cloth, 7-UP, a walk, back rub, a song?

Just give them a reason to stay with you for a few more minutes.

Your loved one has not forgotten you. They just can't recognize you.

Instead of standing or bending, kneel near your loved one. Look up into their eyes. And, offer your hand.

He often feels threatened by what other people do and expresses his fear physically.

"Would you mind helping me put these books on the shelf first?"

"You must have sat in some water! Let's change those pants."

Instead of...

"How are you!"

"No." - "Stop" - "Don't"

"Sit here." - "Wear this."

"Would you like to wear this sweater?"

Try this...

Ask yourself if it's actually unsafe.

- or -

Invite them to something they love.

"Would you like to sit on this comfy chair?"

- and -

"How about I choose today and you choose tomorrow?"

Try this sweater on!

It is much warmer.

You're hair looks lovely!

- or -

I hear you're quite the handyman!