

# COMMUNICATING WITH A PERSON LIVING WITH DEMENTIA



## LINK BETWEEN COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOUR

- Communication is the core of our individuality, identity and connectivity
- Everyone has a unique style of communication
- Communication is a learned skill
- Several factors influence patterns of communication
- 93% of our communication is not verbal

## CHANGES IN COMMUNICATION

Two-way process that changes with dementia

- Thought processing is key
- Progressive decline causes changes in ability to communicate
- Behaviour changes with dementia because thinking is impaired
- Aphasia is the most common change but has no pattern
  - Word finding
  - Making up or substituting words
  - Repetition (perseveration)
  - Reverting to mother-tongue
  - Ability to follow a conversation, reading, writing





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## PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- Behaviour is a form of communication
- All behaviour has meaning
- Focus on the person and making a connection
- Nonverbal communication is effective
- **QTIP** – Quit Taking It Personally
- **DIM** – Does It Matter?
- **KISS** – Keep It Simple and Short
- Join in *their* reality – use therapeutic fibs

## PROBLEM-SOLVING FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

- Physical health – no pain or infection
- Environment – minimize distractions, noise, busy public spaces
- Task – is it too complicated? Need cueing? Need breaks?
- Style of communicating- What am I doing or saying? What can I change?

**COMMUNICATION IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE!**