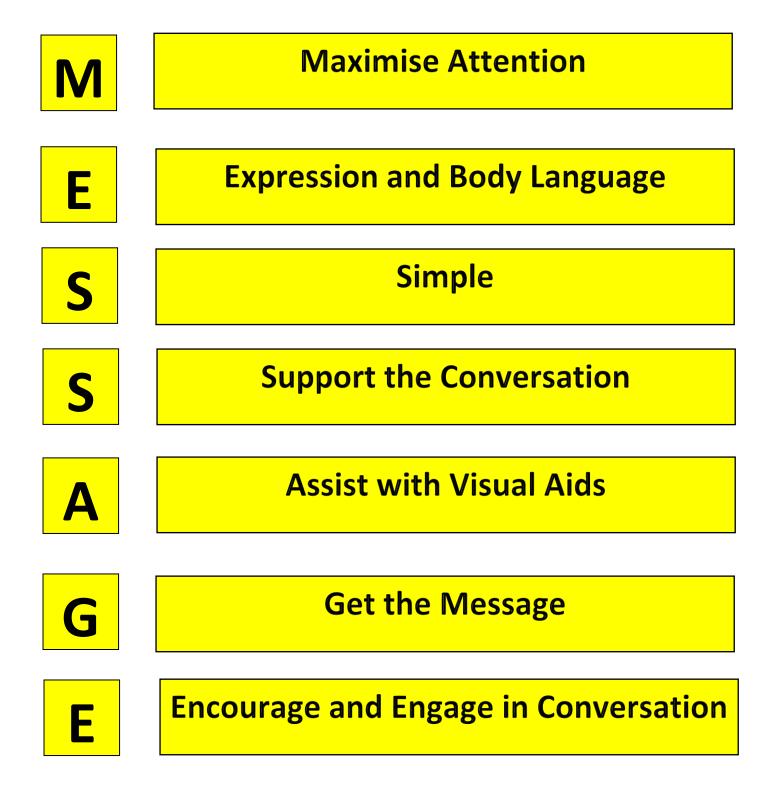
Communicating WITH DEMENTIA











MAXIMISE ATTENTION

Environment

Reduce distractions

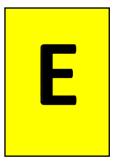
Talk one at a time

The right time

- Not distracted by hunger or needing the toilet
- Not too tired

The right place

- In the same room
- Quiet and calm
- Minimise background noise switch off the TV/ radio; close the door/ window
- Consider lighting
- Face-to-face so you can see each other and maintain eye contact
- Glasses, hearing aids, dentures
- > One-to-one conversations are best. If in a group:
 - One person talking at a time
 - Give direct opportunities to join in
 - Remind of topic and summarise what has been said
 - $\,\circ\,$ Ask a YES/ NO question or a choice question
 - Consider position



EXPRESSION & BODY LANGUAGE

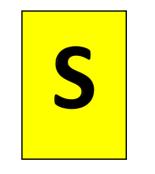
Body language

Facial Expression

Tone of voice

[YOURS & THEIRS!!]

- Gestures and pointing add meaning to spoken words.
- Touch/ holding hands may help maintain attention and provide reassurance.
- Understanding of nonverbal communication is usually maintained longer than understanding of spoken words.
- Try to convey respect and patience.
- > Make and maintain eye contact.
- > Listen with your eyes as well as your ears
 - Look for meaning behind the words
 - Read facial expression and body language





Keep it simple

Sentences

Vocabulary

Offer clear choices

Avoid he/ she/ it

- Keep sentences short and simple.
- Break down instructions into individual steps.
- Use a slightly slower rate but there is no need to shout!
- Pause to allow time to process information.
- Ask choice questions rather than open questions:
 Would you like tea or coffee?
- > Allow plenty time for a response.
- > Use actual names rather than he/ she/ they/ it.
- Say what you mean **don't imply or suggest**.



SUPPORT THE CONVERSATION

Allow time

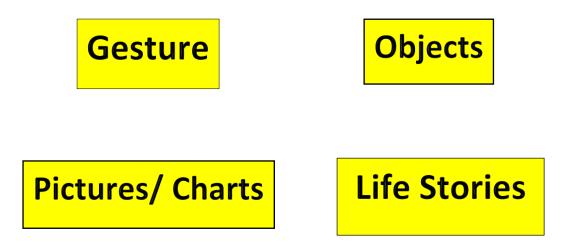


Support Word Finding Difficulties (WFDs)

- Stay calm and relaxed.
- Allow time to process what you have said and to respond.
- > Emphasise key words.
- Repeat yourself if necessary.
- If still not understood, rephrase.
- Keep the topic clear and avoid rapid topic changes.
- If there are word-finding difficulties (WFDs) give plenty of time to see if they can find the word. If you jump in too quickly they might lose their train of thought.
 - Allow extra time.
 - Encourage them to **explain a different way**.
 - Ask them to **show you or take you** to the thing.
 - Listen for the **overall gist.**
 - Judge or *ask* if they **want you to help or guess**.



Assist with Visual Aids



Spoken words last only an instant. Give more time by adding:

0	Written words	○ Gest
Ο	Written words	o Ges

Pictures

- GesturesReal objects
- Use real objects, written words or pictures to help with understanding and remembering topic of conversation.

> Other props can be useful:

• Newspapers

CalendarsClocks

• Timetables

• Maps

- Photos
 - Add names/ captions to the back of photos
 - A photo of the person or place you are going to can be reassuring
 - Old photos can stimulate memories

- Use written words and pictures to support memory and understanding:
 - o List useful words like names or places
 - o Labels in rooms or drawers can be helpful
 - A diary or visitor's book to record daily events
 - Pen and paper beside the phone

Life Stories

- Can be a book, album, memory box or poster
- Can include information about
 - Childhood
 - Education
 - Working life

- Family
- Hobbies
- Likes and Dislikes
- Record of proud moments, favourite activities and memories
- Helps to feel valued and worthwhile
- Can be useful distraction from less helpful thoughts and behaviours



Get the Message

ANY way you can

Message IN

Message OUT

It doesn't matter how **you** get the message across.

➢ It doesn't matter how <u>they</u> get the message across.

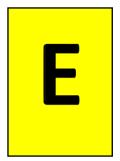
> Use all means possible.

Message OUT

- When they are trying to communicate something
 - Give time
 - Encourage all means of communication
 - Look beyond the words

Message IN

- When you are communicating something. Help them to understand by:
 - Keeping it short and simple
 - Repeating
 - Rephrasing
 - Reminding
 - Using all means possible
 - Written key words
 - Drawing
 - Gestures/pointing
 - Props/ real objects



ENCOURAGE & ENGAGE IN CONVERSATION

Opportunities

Familiar

to talk

topics

Some things

to avoid

Make time for conversation

- Talk about **specific events** that may be remembered
- Talk about everyday things like the weather or your breakfast

Offer regular reminders of the topic:

- You were telling me.....
- We were speaking about...

> Make it easy for them to join in:

- Ask YES/ NO questions
- Ask CHOICE questions

> Show others how to include them in conversation

> Minimise confusion by

- Maintaining regular routines
- Dropping in reminders of:
 - Where they are
 - Who they are with
 - What is happening

Be tactful if the same question is asked over and over. React as if hearing it for the first time. This advice is based on the MESSAGE acronym, developed by The University of Queensland, Australia (2012) in accordance with their Creative Commons License at: <u>www.creativecommons.org/licensesn/by-nc-nd/3.0/</u>

> A training video is also available at: <u>https://youtu.be/jsyAQsdaLiE</u>



QR link to YouTube video