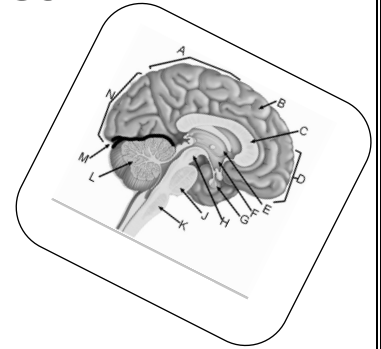


# The Caregiver Toolbox-Dementia Series

## *As the Brain Deteriorates— What Stays and What Goes?*



**Dementia Is *BRAIN FAILURE*---**  
***MORE* Than Just Memory Loss!**

May involve changes in:

- **Short Term Memory (Time Traveling and Getting Lost in Place)**
- **Ability to work with numbers/math/money**
- **Body Sensations**
  - Can still have *pain* but cannot describe *where*.
  - *Hypersensitivity*(*higher sensitivity*) in Mouth, Palms of the Hands, Bottom of the Feet and Genital Areas.
  - Still have the feelings of hunger, coldness, urination, constipation but not as easy to recognize or communicate so instead get restless and irritable.
- **Vision**(Tunnel Vision)
- **Taste Buds—Sweet remains most intact(People like food sweet and cold)**
- **Hallucinations and Delusions**-ie. sensing *and* thinking incorrectly (ie. misinterpreting what is happening in environment and this is very real to the person!)
- **Emotions**---May More Easily Lose Control
- **Language-understanding & using words & concepts**
- **Decision Making, Judgment, & Problem Solving** (called Executive Skills)
- **Insight**—Awareness that there is a problem and what it is.

## What Usually Remains *IN TACT*?

- Automatic Social Responses (Greetings, Handshakes)
- Long Term Memories
- Skills That Were Learned Early In Life (age Birth to 25ish)
- Desire to Remain in *CONTROL*
- Music and Rhythm



## 6 Suggestions That Work!!!

### 1. Get To Know People

- A Person's History....*the LITTLE* things in the day COUNT!!
- What Are Their Patterns & Familiar Routines?
- What Is Their Past?--Likes, Dislikes, Fears—May Show Themselves In Different Ways Now—But Very Important Knowledge.
- People Need To Feel Useful— That Their Presence Matters—That They Are Helping Somehow....Not Just About An Activities Department...About All The Activities Of The Day.....In What Manner Do The Tasks Of The Day Get DONE?
- It Can Become Very Easy To Pay More Attention To The Task Itself Than The Person...This Is A Huge Challenge.

### 2. Pay Attention to Visual Cues!!

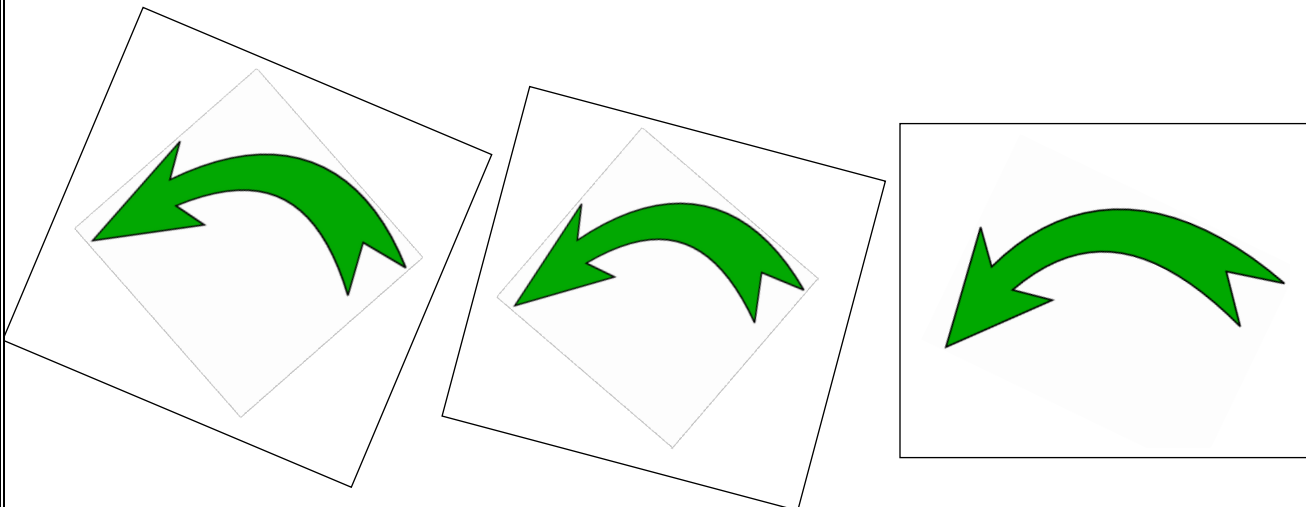
- Your Facial Expressions.
- Your Head Motions.
- Your Movements---People Will Mimic(Copy) Your Actions.
- Avoid An Angry/Confrontational Stance & Finger Pointing.
- Match Visual Cues To Vocal & Touch Cues--(Ie. Take Coats & Suitcases Out of Sight, Make Beds, Take Away Finished Food. Etc.)

### 3. Use Vocal Cues

- Avoid “Parent Voice.”
- Avoid High Sing/Song Pitch.
- Avoid Anything Resembling The “Royal We.”
- ***AVOID ALL*** Correcting and Arguing!!!!!!
- Use Conversational Mode But Make Requests ***Short And Sweet.***
- Ask Don’t Tell. “Do Me A Favor”, “Would You Mind,” “Tell You What, I Need”
- Say I’m Sorry Frequently—“I’m Sorry I Made You Angry,” “I’m Sorry, This Is Hard,” “I’m Sorry, I Embarrassed You”

### 4. Pay Attention to The ORDER of Tasks(called Sequencing)

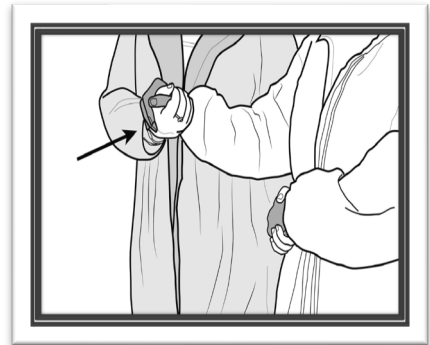
- Go Brush Your Teeth.....How Many Steps In This Request?
- Think Though Tasks To The “Hidden Assumptions”—Crucially Important!!
- Identify What Parts Of Sequence Are Still Available To The Person...Usually Those Skills Were Established Before Age 25
- Model Behaviors You Want—Ie. Dry Hands, Scrape Feet On Carpet, Hold On To Rail.
- Use Appropriate Visual Cues to Match Your Voice—Ie. Pretend To Unbutton or Use Zipper, Make Washing Motions With Washcloth, Pick Up Spoon To Eat Ice Cream.



## 5. Always, Always, Always USE POSITIVE APPROACH™

1. Approach From The FRONT-NOT From The Side Or From Behind A Person!!
2. Go SLOW.
3. Get LOW-Match Person's Eye Level.
4. Pause At The EDGE of Public Space(about 1 & ½ arms' length)
5. Offer Your HAND With A Greeting and a Smile.
6. Use The Person's NAME (Which Name?)/Introduce Yourself.
7. Wait For A RESPONSE
8. Wait For The PERSON To Allow You To Move In Closer.
9. Get To The SIDE---The PERSON'S Dominant Side.
10. Use HAND **UNDER** HAND Assistance.

TM Used with Permission from Positive Approach to Care Inc.



## 6. Use Hand **UNDER** Hand Assistance™

- Offer your hand to the person's dominant hand.
- Slide your hand around so that the thumbs are encircling and the person's hand is on **TOP of your hand. Your hand is underneath theirs.**
- Move to the person's side.....

### Uses of this Stance

- Use this stance to exert light palm pressure-which can be calming.
- Use this stance to gauge a person's response to touch.
- Use this stance to allow a person to have some privacy in personal care.
- Use this stance to establish safe physical boundaries.
- Use this stance to guide the person's hand and arm movement.

### Your Other Hand-

- Can place on the person's shoulder if they will tolerate a little light pressure.
- Can hold on to the person's opposite hand to steady while walking.
- Can use to assist in personal care.

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## **This information is provided by: The National Family Caregiver Support Program**



This is a nationally funded program operated in Central Ohio by the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA). It offers caregiver workshops and funds services designed to assist caregivers on a short term basis. The services include: information and assistance, counseling, respite, and other supplemental services.

**Request a copy or download our other guide from our website [www.coaaa.org](http://www.coaaa.org):**

- Central Ohio Older Adults Resource Guide
- The Caregiver Toolbox
- Central Ohio Long Term Care & Hospice Guide
- Central Ohio Housing & Home Repair Guide
- Central Ohio Private Homecare Guide
- Central Ohio Utility Guide
- Central Ohio Prescription Guide
- Central Ohio Transportation Guide
- Central Ohio Support Group Guide
- Central Ohio Respite Guide
- Central Ohio Moving & Transitions Guide
- Books, Videos, and Websites for Family Caregivers.
- Central Ohio Kinship Care Guide
- Central Ohio Hiring Guide for In Home Caregivers
- Central Ohio Pet Care Guide

**The COAAA also provides monthly Caregiver Support Groups & Information Sessions. For more information, call 1-800-589-7277 or visit our website.**

**Or in your county, call one of these agencies:**

- **Delaware**-SourcePoint 740-363-6677
- **Fairfield**-Meals on Wheels Older of Fairfield County 740-681-5050
- **Fayette**-Community Action Commission of Fayette Co. 740-335-7282
- **Franklin**-Franklin Co. Office on Aging 614-525-6200
- **Licking**-Licking Co. Aging Program 740-345-0821 or 1-800-452-0097
- **Madison**-Madison Co. Senior Center 740-852-3001
- **Pickaway**-Pickaway County Senior Center 740-474-8831
- **Union**-Union County Senior Services 937-644-1010