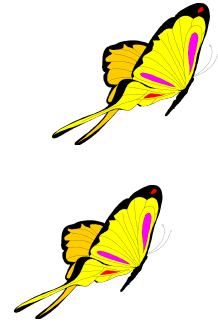


**GREENWOODS ELDERCARE SOCIETY**  
**A HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS**



**Working Together The  
Gentlecare Way**



From Moyra Jones Resources,  
9264 Burnlake Drive,  
BURNABY, B.C. V5A 3K9

# **COMMUNICATION**

**HUMAN BEINGS CRITICAL ACTIVITY**

**COMMUNICATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET**

IT INVOLVES TALKING AND LISTENING

IT IS A VERY DIFFICULT ACTIVITY

**GOOD COMMUNICATION REQUIRES PREPARATION**

**In all things success**

**Depends upon**

Previous preparation.

And without such preparation

There is sure to be failure

Confucius

**COMMUNICATION IS ONE OF THE LOVELIEST ACTIVITIES  
YOU CAN DO WITH ELDERLY PEOPLE**

# TIPS TO ACHIEVE THE COMMUNICATION CONNECTION WITH ELDERLY PERSONS

- Establish who you are
- Get permission to enter the person's space
- Sit down, make eye contact
- Focus or "ground" the person
- Slow the pace ... let them set the pace
- Take your time ... make the time
- Speak so the person can hear and see you
- Be understandable and clear
- Listen. Remember - silence is golden
- Be sensitive to feelings
- Don't tease
- Don't call them by "funny" names
- Don't patronize
- Minimize distraction
- Use an object as an intermediary
- Go with whatever subject they suggest...
- Listen to the same old story as often as it is told
- Always thank them for the great privilege, fun, experience, honour it is to be with them.

# COMMUNICATION

“Remember when .....?”

## CONVERSATIONAL TOPICS THAT WORK !

- Talk about, through an object (perhaps something in the room)
- Don't ask QUESTIONS !
- Don't ask “How are you?” Instead try:
  - “You look nice/sleepy/lonesome/happy”
  - “I like your sweater. It's a lovely color!”
- Oh, I'm out of breath! Can I sit a minute with you?
- Family issues – theirs or yours or the Queen's
- What I saw on my way here .....
- Sports - especially good for men
- Concerts/music – “I heard the loveliest ..... !”
  - “Would you like to listen to .....?”
- Church
- War – medals & stories
- Prices and shopping
- Pets – pictures of or real
- The “old “ days – Their careers, different jobs, achievements -
- Life review
- “Remember when “(stamps were 2 cents, eggs were 10 cents a dozen, you bought your first car?)”
- Jokes or funny stories
- Talk about dying – help them plan creatively
- use your own feelings and experiences

LISTEN FOR: “I'm so tired of living”. “Everyone says I'm OK:  
I'm NOT OK.”

# ACTIVITIES RELATED TO COMMUNICATION WITH ELDERLY PEOPLE

## VISITING

- Explain and reassure them about current living arrangements
- If they ask – reassure them about finances
- Bring them a bouquet of flowers and Talk about them
  - Arrange them together
  - Look at them
  - Hold and smell them
- Help them write to friends and family
- Help them record their life history
- Bring a baby to visit
- Bring a pet to visit
- Find out their old reading habits and read aloud to them
  - The newspaper
  - The Reader's Digest, etc.
  - The Bible or a daily meditation
- Read the lyrics of songs
- Read or recite familiar poetry, nursery rhymes together
- Read old recipes – and discuss
- Do gentle shoulder massage
- Brush their hair
- Massage their hands, feet with scented lotion
- Bring in a potted plant, discuss gardening
- Use big, colourful pictures of pets, kids, garden, food
- Wind wool with them
- You do crafts while you visit and discuss
- Take tiny gifts
  - 3 chocolates
  - soap
  - piece of costume jewellery
  - “hankie”
  - samples of scent or perfume
- Unravel old knitting – a sweater – and discuss
- Tear cloth for braided rugs
- Have person assist you with braiding
- Try to promote bonding with another person nearby

- Pray with them
- Read inspirational material to them

## MUSIC

- Arrange for a roving troubadour
  - Guitar
  - Harp
  - Mouth organ
  - Keyboard
- Sing and hum old hymns, favourite songs

Tell me tales that to me were so dear  
Long, long ago, long long ago.  
Sing me the songs I delighted to hear  
Long, long ago, long ago.  
Let me believe that you love as your loved  
Long long ago, long ago.

T.H. Bagley  
From Aging is a Family Affair  
Wendy Thompson

- Try a music player with earphones
- Talk about Dame Vera Lynn or some other famous singer
  - Hum her hit tunes
- Take a music player and play one lovely piece
- Have a hymn sing after supper – with just the first verse of familiar old hymns.