

# Worksheet 5:

## Tips for communicating with a person with dementia

Alzheimer's Society suggests that, before we speak with or to a person with dementia, we should consider the following:

- Make sure you're in a good place to talk – quiet, with good lighting and without too many distractions (e.g. no radio or TV on in the background)
- Get the person's full attention before you start
- Position yourself where the person can see you as clearly as possible (e.g. with your face well-lit) and try to be on the same level as the person, rather than standing over them
- Sit close to the person (although not so close that you are in their personal space) and make eye contact
- Make sure your body language is open and relaxed
- Have enough time to spend with the person; if you feel rushed or stressed, take some time to calm down
- Think about what you are going to talk about; it may be useful to have an idea for a particular topic ready, and you can also use the person's environment to stimulate topics
- If there is a time of day where the person will be more able to communicate, try to use it to ask any questions or talk about anything you need to
- Make the most of 'good' days and find ways to adapt on 'bad' ones
- Make sure any of the person's other needs are met before you start (e.g. they're not hungry or in pain)

We must also consider how we speak when communicating with a person with dementia:

- Speak clearly and calmly
- Speak at a slightly slower pace and allow time between sentences for the person to process the information and respond
- Avoid speaking sharply or raising your voice
- Use short, simple sentences
- Try to communicate with the person in a conversational way, not in a manner that involves question after question (it can feel like an interrogation)

Ref: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/symptoms-and-diagnosis/symptoms/tips-for-communicating-dementia#content-start>