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Penn Memory Center welcomes you to
Caring for the Caregiver:
people caring for so

Questions? Contact:

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Caring for the Caregiver: Week 3

Communication Skills

*Communicating with your relative and
expressing yourself effectively*

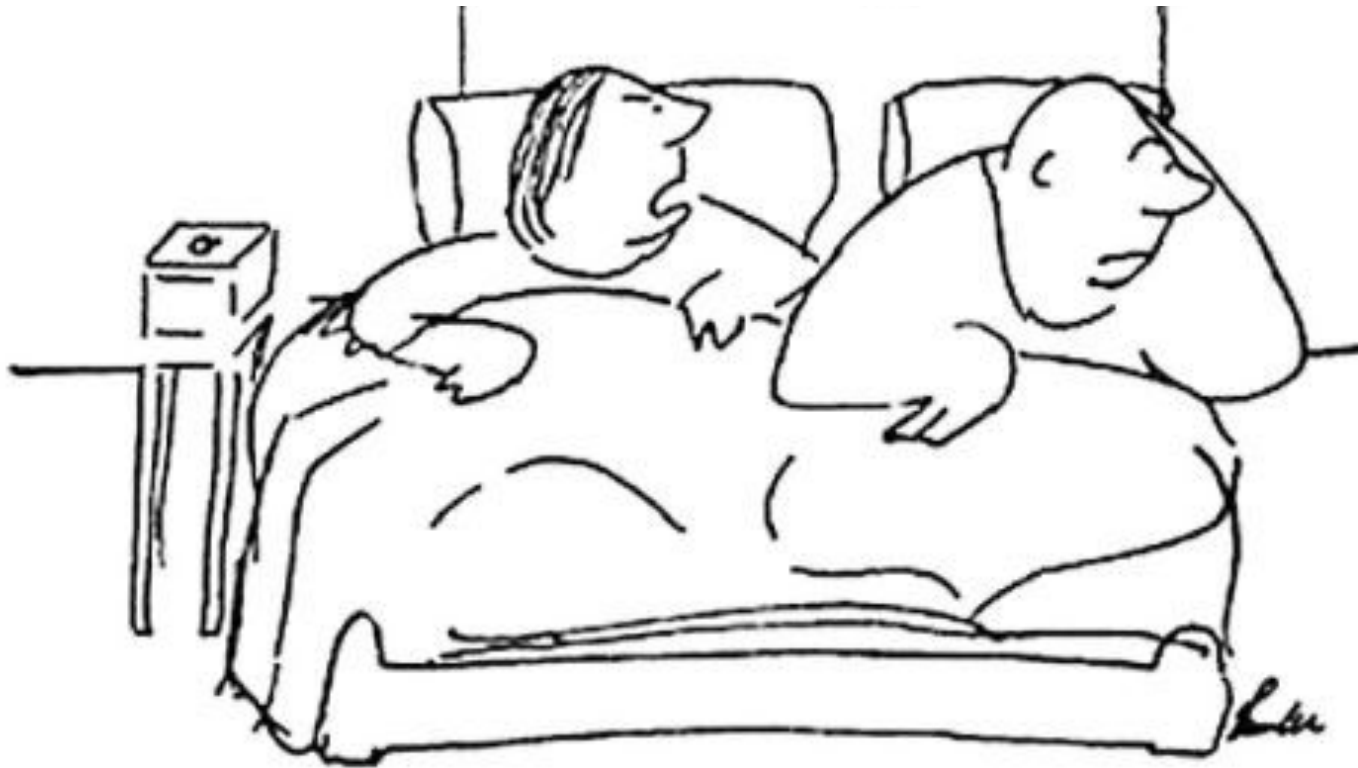
The importance of effective communication



Cognitive Impairment:

- affects your relative's ability to understand what you say
- limits your relative's ability to express what he/she wants to say
- limits your relative's ability to remember their own thoughts from one moment to the next
- can prevent your relative from finding the right words or finding words at all.

Communication



"All right, have it your way - you heard a seal bark!"

The PWD cannot change his/her communication problems, so it's important that we find other ways to communicate with them – we have to change the ways we communicate.

Assess your communication style

- How are you presenting yourself?
- What is your approach?
- What's happening in the environment?
- How's your timing?
- How much information are you providing?

What NOT to do

Do not argue.

Avoid explaining
or rationalizing.

Don't draw
attention to
repeat questions.

Avoid talking
about plans too
far in advance.

Avoid reminding
the PWD what
they cannot do.

Practice example 1

It's 9 PM and Amy wants to start putting her husband, Joel to bed. Joel is watching the news in the living room on the highest volume possible. From the top of the stairs, Amy yells, "time for bed!" Joel doesn't move. Amy yells again, "come on Joel, I said it's time to get ready for bed!" Joel continues to stay put. Amy walks into the living room yelling "why do you insist on making everything so difficult?" and turns the TV off herself.

Practice example 2

Rick arrives at his parents' house to take his dad, John, out to brunch. When he gets inside, John is still in his pajamas and is sitting at the table eating breakfast. "Dad," Rick says, "what are you doing? I told you a hundred times we were going out today! I put it on the calendar!" John replies, "no, you never told me anything. I would have remembered." Rick grabs the calendar and points to the entry, saying, "see? It's right here!" "Well, it wasn't there before," John replies. Rick throws his hands up and storms out of the house.

Communication Evaluation

-What I said: _____

-How I felt before this exchange: _____

-What my body and face looked like during this exchange: _____

-What else was happening in the room while we were talking: _____

-How my relative responded to me: _____

-How I felt after this exchange: _____

-What I would change about my language next time: _____

-What I would change about my delivery next time: _____

-Other comments:

Relaxation Exercise

“The awareness that emerges when you are paying attention, on purpose, to the present moment, without judgment.” (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

“Your mind is like a kindergarten class, and meditating is like trying to get your thoughts to take a nap. If one wakes up, tell them gently to go back to sleep. If your mind thinks, ‘but you have a to-do list!’ just say, ‘shhhh.’ (Cup of Jo)

Relaxation Exercise: The Body Scan

Tara Brach is a beloved mindfulness practitioner and guide.

For homework this week, set aside 20 minutes to sit or lie in a quiet, warm place where you have privacy and listen to Brach’s guided meditation, The Body Scan, which can be accessed in the link below:

<https://www.tarabrach.com/meditation-basic-body-scan-2/>

Homework

Homework trackers can be found in the website under Week 2. If you need help locating them, email me at felicia.greenfield@pennteam.upenn.edu

- + ● 1. Complete Weekly Mood Tracker – record daily mood for each day this week
- 2. Practice your signal breath and rate stress level before and after your practice once a day.
- 3. Practice the 20 Breaths exercise once a day.
- 4. Complete four different 6-Column Thought Records this week.
- 5. Evaluate your current communication style.
- 6. Practice at least one 20-minute body scan.