

# “A Focus on Connection”

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## What is “connection”?

According to Merriam-Webster:

The act of connecting: the state of being connected: such as

- A relation of personal intimacy (as of family ties)
- A person connected with another especially by marriage, kinship or common interest

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# What does it mean to connect with someone?

According to Katie Stiles (medically reviewed by Lori Lawrenz, PsyD)

“Human connection is the sense of closeness and belongingness a person can experience when having supportive relationships with those around them. Connection is when two or more people interact with each other and each person feels valued, seen, and heard.

There’s no judgment, and you feel stronger and nourished after engaging with them.”

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## CARES® Approach

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## What does CARES mean?

**C – Connect**

**A – Assess**

**R – Respond**

**E – Evaluate**

**S – Share**

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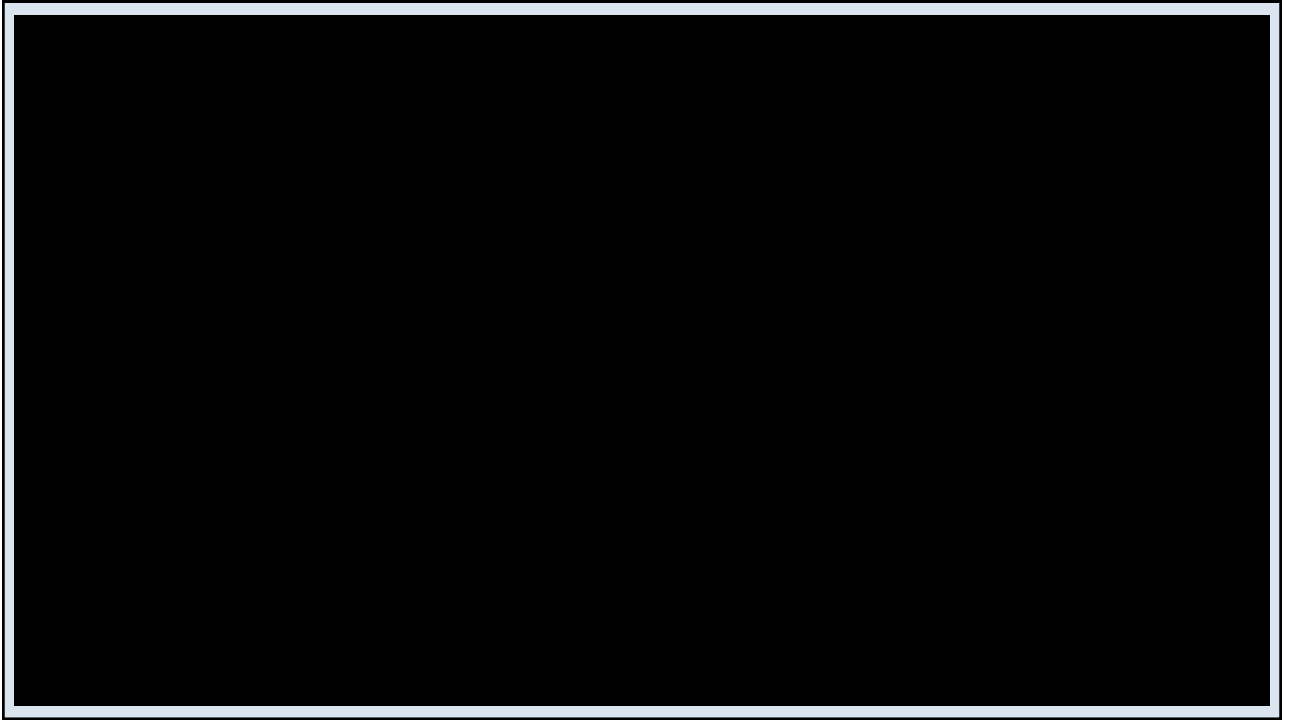
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## Connection – why is it SO important?

1. The more you know about a person, the more connected you can be with them.
2. The more connected you are, the better you can manage their day-to-day needs.
3. The better you manage their needs, the better the entire situation will be for all involved.
4. The better the situation is, the better the quality of ALL interactions.

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“ To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others. ”

Tony Robbins

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## Communication and Dementia

Taken from: [Alzheimer's Caregiving: Changes in Communication Skills | National Institute on Aging \(nih.gov\)](https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers-caregiving-changes-communication-skills)

1. First step: Know that communication will change as the disease progresses.
2. Second step: Try some tips that can help.
  - Eye contact
  - Tone of voice
  - Body language
  - Two-way conversation as long as possible
  - Use methods other than talking
  - Distraction

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## The person with dementia/Alzheimer's may have trouble with:

- Word finding
- Understanding what a word means
- Paying attention
- Remembering the steps in “common activities” (“Good morning routine”)
- Blocking out background noise
- Focusing on more than one thing at a time
- Easily frustrated
- More sensitive to touch, tone and loudness of voice (Why?)

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## Making Communication Easier.....

1. Make eye contact and call the person by their preferred name
2. Be aware of body language, tone of voice, what and how you say things
3. Encourage 2-way conversation (adapt as needed)
4. Verbal vs. non-verbal communication
5. Try distraction if communication becomes challenging

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## Some other communication thoughts:

- Show a warm, loving, matter of fact manner.....stay calm
- Hold their hand/gentle touch while talking
- Listen to what the person is saying OR not saying (even if understanding is challenging – watch body language)
- Allow decision making – even simple decisions (control)
- Be patient (illness NOT person) and avoid arguing
- Simple step by step instructions
- Repeat if needed and don't interrupt
- Don't talk about person in front of them
- Avoid “baby-talk”, “nicknames” (honey, sweetie, dear, etc. unless)



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## Mehrabian's communication model: 7—38—55

Professor of psychology Albert Mehrabian studied the importance of non-verbal communications in the 1970s. Through his research, he discovered that the use of non-verbal communication was stronger than first assumed. For this reason, he formulated the 7-38-55% communication rule which is still widely used today.

It appears that people don't put much trust in words alone—only 7%. But, when it comes to non-verbal communication, it's a whopping 93%!

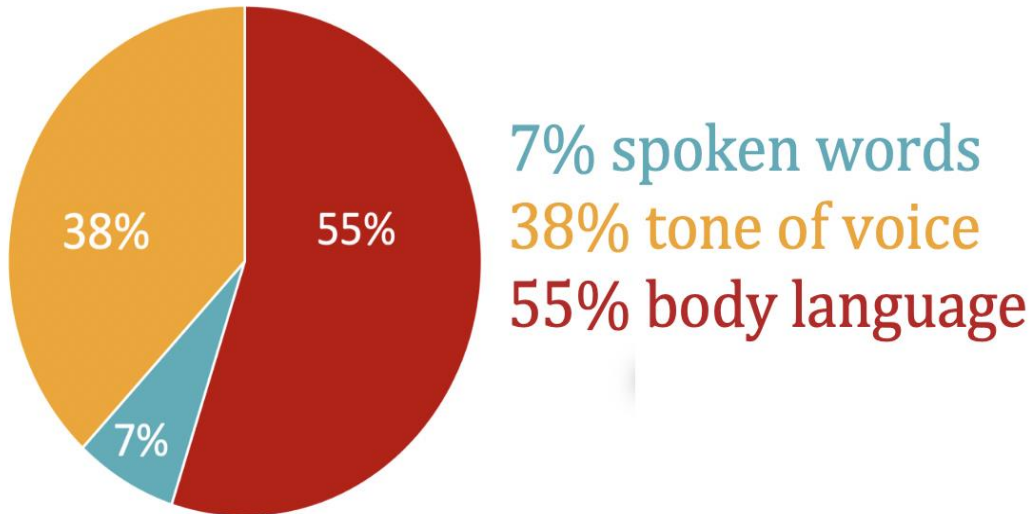
***“The non-verbal elements are particularly important for communicating feelings and attitude, especially when they are incongruent: if words and body language disagree, one tends to believe the body language.”***

–Albert Mehrabian, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles

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Dr Albert Mehrabian's 7-38-55% Communication Rule  
**Elements of Personal Communication**



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## Things to say:

1. Instead of pointing out mistakes, try “Let’s try it this way”
2. Instead of “Don’t do that”, try “Please do this” OR “I would love for you to help me do this”
3. Always say “thanks” even if the result is not quite what you are looking for

(\* ) Always think about whether a negative reaction from you is worth the reaction from them.

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## You can also:

1. Ask yes-no questions
2. Limit the number of choices
3. Use different words if the person seems to have trouble understanding (simple is better)
4. Try to avoid – “Don’t you remember?” OR “I told you”
5. Avoid correcting the person
6. Can consider word helping if you know
7. If necessary – YOU take a time out.

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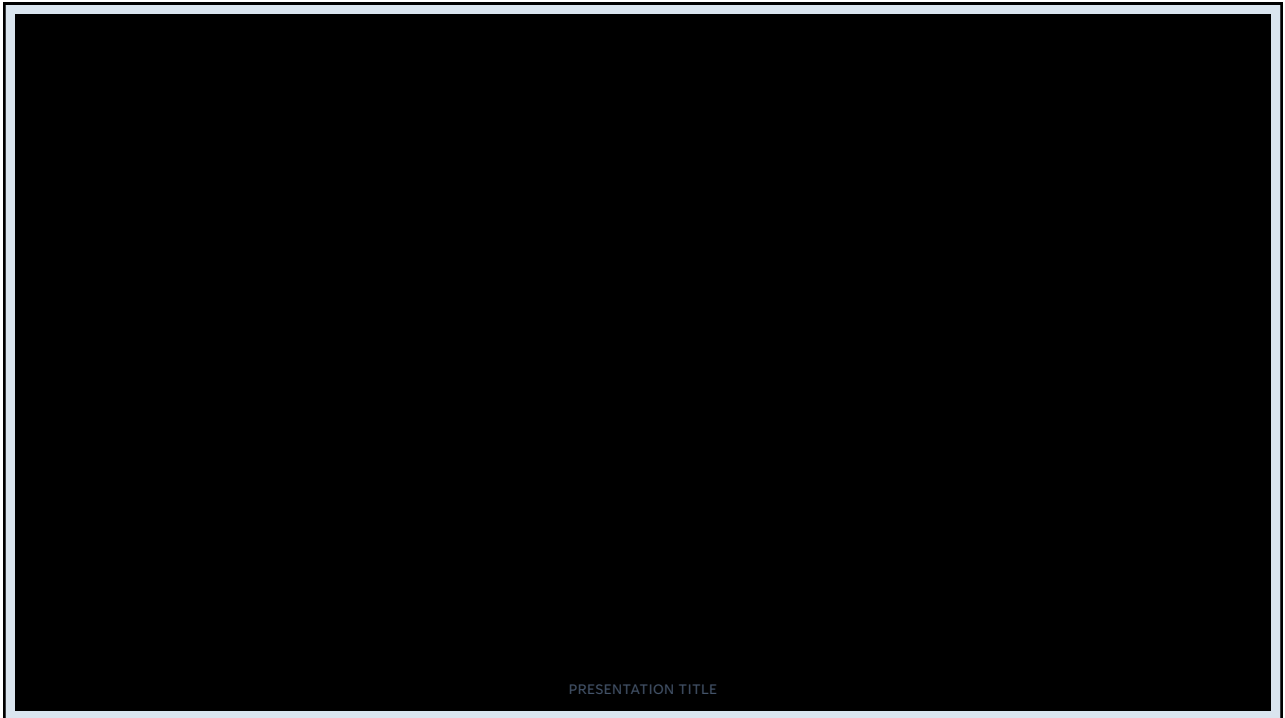
## *Always remember:*

*The person with dementia is not giving you a hard time.*

*The person with dementia is having a hard time.*

*-Kerry Kleinbergen*

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***Thank you***

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