



# FEEDING ASSISTANT TRAINING SESSION #4



Vanderbilt Center for Quality Aging & Qsource

# Presenter



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- Assistant Professor
- Vanderbilt University School of Nursing
- Research Interests: quality of life and quality of care in long-term care; dementia care

# Feeding Assistant Training Session 4

1. Highlight the importance of good communication
2. Discuss the different ways staff and residents communicate (verbal v. non-verbal)
3. Provide specific strategies for communicating with residents with sensory impairments
4. Explain how dementia influences communication
5. FOCUS philosophy for communicating



# Clear Communication w/ Residents

- Why is it so important?
  - It's essential to provide residents with good, quality care
  
- What prevents good communication between staff and residents?
  - Talking too fast
  - Changing the subject
  - Clichés and false assurances
  - Insensitivity
  - Sensory impairment

# Being an Active Listener

- Be attentive
- Show interest & ask clarifying questions
- Avoid interruptions and distractions
- Restate what the resident has said to check understanding



# Verbal v. Non-verbal Communication

## VERBAL

- Spoken word including word choice, tone, and speed
- May be a challenge for some residents



## NON-VERBAL

- Body language including:
  - ▣ Posture
  - ▣ Eye Contact
  - ▣ Hand movements
  - ▣ Facial expressions
  - ▣ Touch



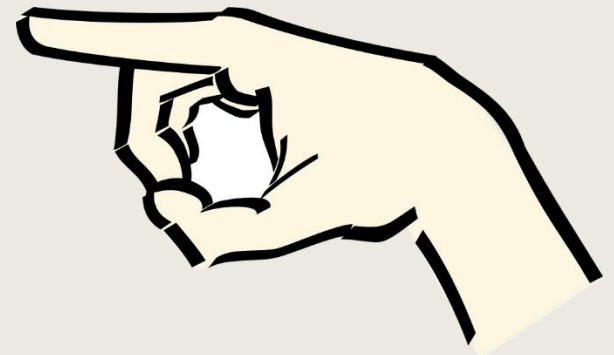
# Positive Verbal Communication

- Speak on the resident's "good" side
- Use the resident's proper name
- Utilize a friendly tone
- Be patient
  - ▣ Speak slowly
  - ▣ Use short sentences or one step commands
  - ▣ Allow time for resident to process and respond
- Repeat statements as originally made



# Positive Non-Verbal Communication

- Approach slowly and calmly
- *Do not* approach from behind
- Face the resident while speaking
- Make eye contact
- Smile, nod, move hands

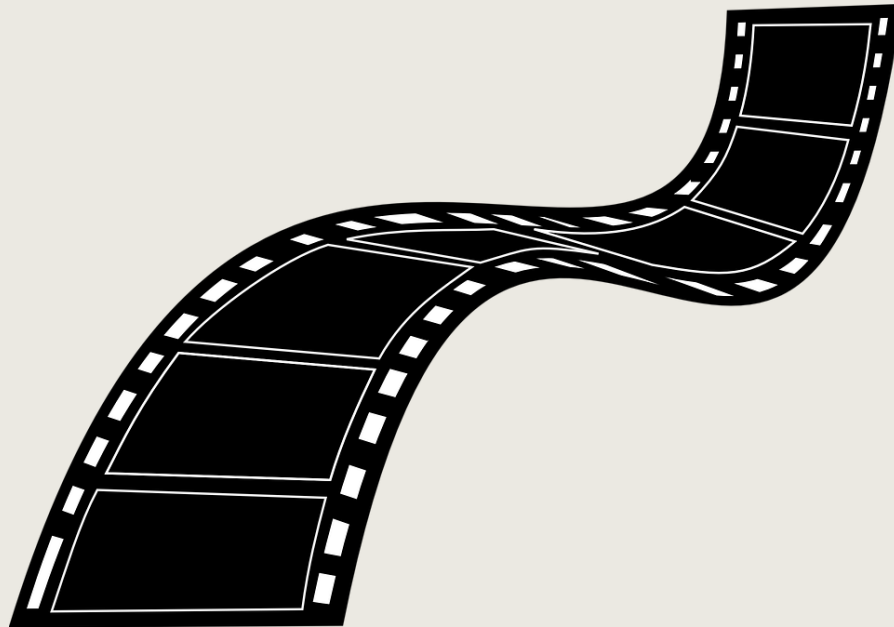


# Verbal v. Non-Verbal Communication Video

Identify 2  
non-verbal  
communication  
techniques.

Was the staff  
actively  
listening?

How could the  
communication  
be better?



# Communication & Sensory Impairments



## VISION IMPAIRED

- Identify yourself by name and title
- Position yourself close to resident in good lighting
- Use talk and touch
- Inform resident before you leave

## HEARING IMPAIRED

- Speak
  - ▣ Slowly and clearly
  - ▣ At a lower pitch
  - ▣ At a slightly higher volume
- Keep conversations short and directed to a single topic



# Communication & Sensory Impairments

## APHASIA

- ❑ Keep conversations short
- ❑ Ask yes/ no questions
- ❑ Encourage resident to point/nod
- ❑ Give resident plenty of time to respond
- ❑ Paraphrase
- ❑ Avoid frustrated body language

## COGNITIVE/ UNDERSTANDING

- ❑ Use simple words, sentences
- ❑ Give 1 step instructions
- ❑ Focus on 1 topic
- ❑ Use gestures to reinforce your verbal communications

# Communication & Dementia

- What is dementia?
- Dementia can impact the parts of the brain related to:
  - Memory
  - Language (speech & comprehension)
  - Concentration
  - Orientation
  - Judgment
  - Sequencing

# FOCUS Technique

- F- Face to Face
- O- Orient
- C- Continue
- U- Unstick
- S- Structure



# FOCUS: Face to Face

- Face the patient directly
- Smile
- Talk before you touch
- Maintain eye contact
- Speak in soothing tones



# FOCUS: Orient

- Guide the conversation
- Redirect
- Allow plenty of time to respond
- Use visual aids





# FOCUS: Continue the Same Topic

- Short attention span/ loss of interest in food in front of them
- If they refuse, offer them something else
- Use verbal reminders
- Try to stay with the resident



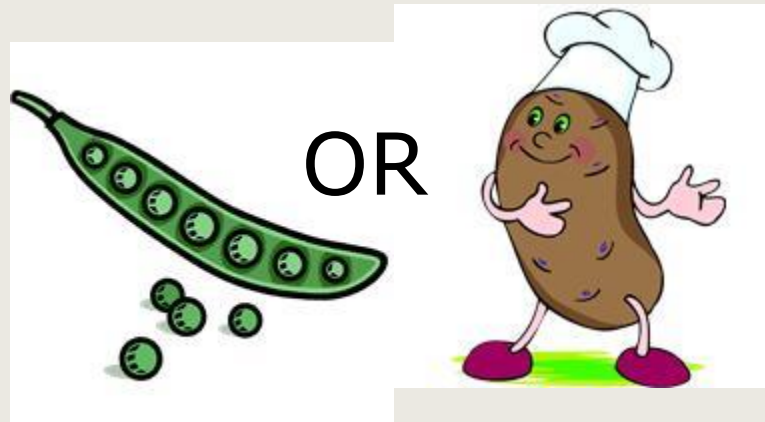
# FOCUS: Unstick

- Residents may have difficulty finding the right words
- Be patient and respectful, not corrective, when they get the words wrong
- Ask them to point to what they want



# FOCUS: Structure Your Question

- Sentences: short, simple, direct
- Provide only 2 choices at a time
- Example: “Do you want peas or potatoes?”



# Communication & Dementia

How does the person with dementia interpret the staff's communication in this video?



# Communication Session Summary

- Key points
  - Good communication is important
  - Communication involves active listening
  - Communication is both verbal and nonverbal
  - Special techniques help communication for residents with sensory impairment or dementia

# Next Session and Contact Us

- Recording of this session will be available via atom Alliance's Learning On Demand  
(<http://atomalliance.org/webinars/on-demand-webinars/feeding-assistance-webinar-series/>)
  
- Next live webinar scheduled for:  
July 20<sup>th</sup> at 2PM CST / 3PM EST
  
- In the meantime, if you have questions or comment, contact us at:  
Phone: 615-936-2718  
Email: [centerforqualityaging@Vanderbilt.edu](mailto:centerforqualityaging@Vanderbilt.edu)  
Fax: 615-322-1754