

Dementia and the family: Download and do

Ways to communicate

This activity will help you and the family to:

- Understand that you may need to try new and different ways to communicate with your loved one
- Identify some communication techniques which will allow you to continue to have meaningful and caring conversations with your loved one
- Ensure that communication remains at the heart of family life, with your loved one able to voice their preferences, retain their dignity and sense of identity, and enjoy the art of good conversation

About the 'Diamond 9' technique

This activity uses a tool / technique called the 'Diamond 9'. It can be used to stimulate discussion, explore what you all think about things as a family and come up with priorities and solutions all together, as a 'team'.

You start by coming up with 9 or more 'statements' (or ideas) relating to the problem or question you are trying to solve. You then have to work out, as a family, which statements / ideas are the most important or significant. The 9 statements you chose (if you came up with more than 9 originally, you will have to leave some out) are then ordered as a diamond shape with the most important statement / idea placed at the top and the least important at the bottom.

In the case of this activity, the question you are trying to solve as a family is:
How can we improve communication with our loved one?

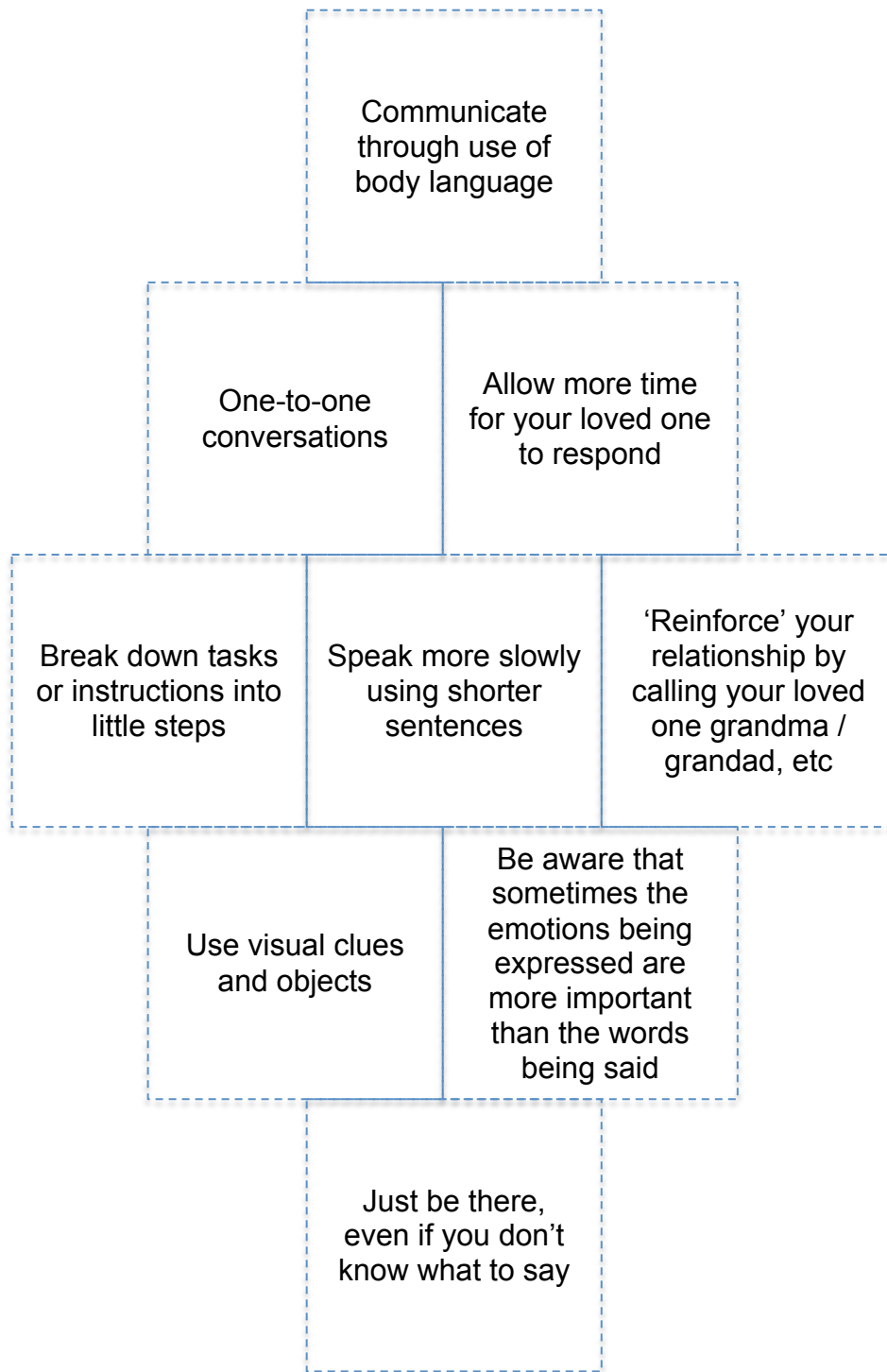
On the 'diamond' on the next page, we have come up with some ideas for you. Begin by cutting up the cards with the ideas on them (if you wish to use these) or write your own ideas on the blank 'squares'. When you have decided on your final 9, you then need to put these in order of priority. What ideas do you think will be the most successful? Attach these cards to the 'diamond 9' template on the third page of this handout.

Please note that, if possible, you should involve your loved one in this activity. What do they feel would help them most?

You can use this 'diamond 9' technique to discuss and overcome other challenges, such as:

- Deciding which of the activities in *Dementia and the family* you are going to do first. (You will have to come up with your 9 favourite ones, first of all)
- Prioritising the small changes you are going to make to ensure your home is more 'dementia-friendly'
- Talking to your children about how dementia affects their loved one, identifying the key 'messages' you want to tell them first. (I would hope that at the top of your diamond is that their loved one is still the person they know and love!

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