







BRIGHT Workshop

Building Resilience &
Inner Strength for
Caregivers of Persons
with Memory Loss

Session 4

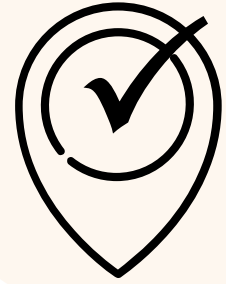
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Today's Topics

01	02	03	04
			
Empathy: Foundation of Communication	Communication and Memory Loss	Getting Help from Family	Communicating with Healthcare Professionals

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Check In



Session 3: Atlas CareMap

- ✓ Did you do the activities you scheduled? If not, what happened?
- ✓ How can you adapt your activities or schedule?

Session 2: Positive Activity Log

- ✓ Did you do the activities you scheduled? If not, what happened?
- ✓ How can you adapt your activities or schedule?

Session 2: Shared Positive Activities

- ✓ Did you do the activities you scheduled?
- ✓ Are there different activities you can do?
- ✓ If you did, was there any change?

Session 1: Power of Balance – Week Three

- ✓ Is everyone still journaling?
- ✓ This was our last week for this task. Have you noticed any changes – small or large?

Session 1: Mindful Breathing

- ✓ Did you continue to set aside some time each day to do your mindful breathing?
- ✓ Were you able to use mindful breathing when in the midst of a stressful caregiving situation? The more you can practice this skill and learn how to calm yourself, the more you'll use it when you are stressed from caregiving.

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Empathy

The ability for someone to figuratively put themselves in the shoes of another person so they can feel what that person is feeling

When receiving empathy, the person feels understood, accepted, important, and above all, connected to another person

Memory Loss can make someone:

- lose the feeling of being connected to others
- Some will react with agitation and some by withdrawing

Empathy

- helps caregivers connect
- helps care recipients to feel understood and safe

Empathy is not a fixed trait – it is a skill that can be improved through practice!

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Activity: Experiencing Empathy

Instructions: Imagine yourself in the place of the patient.

You received a phone call from your doctor's office requesting a clinic visit to discuss results of recent tests.

Arriving at the clinic, you're insecure and somewhat bewildered because you feel like other people are looking at you and all the background noise is distracting.

When you get in the doctor's office, the doctor and your caregiver carry on a discussion about your condition while totally ignoring you. You are trying to follow the conversation, but the doctor seems to be talking very fast and you don't quite understand all the words.

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Activity: Experiencing Empathy

Discussion

- Can you figure out what the diagnosis is here?
- What about the prognosis?
- What instructions have been given?
- How did it feel when the doctor and your caregiver discussed your diagnosis as though you weren't even in the room?
- What impact on your thoughts could this have?
- What about how you are feeling?
- Alzheimer's Disease is mentioned a couple times - what do you think the reaction would be to that diagnosis?

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Communication and Memory Loss

Memory loss affects communication

- It affects one's ability to understand what is said
- It limits the ability to express what he or she wants to say.
- It leads to problems finding the right words, as well as an inability to remember thoughts from one moment to the next.
- It causes communication problems which can lead to behavior problems.

IMPORTANT POINT

Because care recipients cannot change their communication problems, it is important that we find other ways to communicate with them.

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Communication Strategies

Use Open Body Language

Be Aware of Their Body Language

Be Attentive

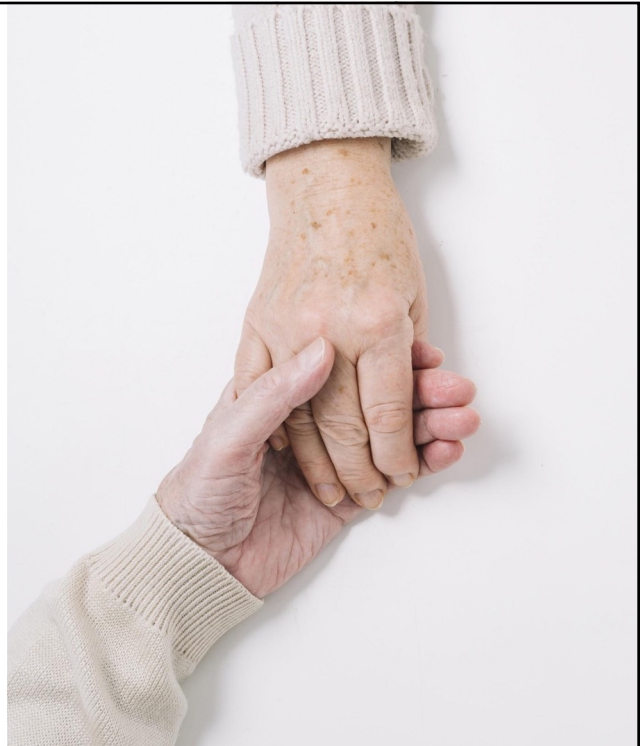
Listen to Hear, Not to Talk

Use Voice and Words to Convey Empathy

Deal with the Emotion not the Content

Avoid!

- Don't argue with your care recipient.
- Don't tell the person what he or she cannot do.



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Getting Help from Friends and Family

Examine your needs

What exactly is the problem?

Describe your thoughts and feelings clearly

Be persistent, yet flexible

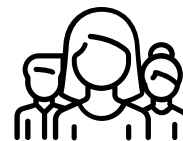
Avoid substituting opinions for facts

Give detailed information

Break it down into smaller parts

Listen to whether the listener can fulfill the request.

DON'T GIVE UP!



Role Playing Activity

Pairs will role play a scenario where you will need to ask for help.

Discussion

How hard was this for you to do?
 What part did you find easy?
 What part did you struggle with?
 Is this something you would do at home with your own family?

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Communication with Healthcare Professionals

Top 3 Tips

- Make a list of questions and bring it with you to the appointment so as to maximize use of time.
- Be clear when you speak with the health care provider. Try not to ramble.
- If you have access to an online service send your questions to the doctor before your visit

Other Tips

- Try requesting a longer appointment
- Educate yourself about the disease
- Learn the routine at your provider's office
- Accept that sometimes there are no answers
- Smile, and say thank you – you want to be remembered in a positive way



NIH offers a webpage with articles, videos, and printed booklets on this topic

<https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/talking-your-doctor>

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Take Away

- Empathy is a skill we develop throughout our lifetime.
- Caregivers need to shift expectations and the ways they communicate, rather than depend on the person they are caring for to change how they communicate.
- Clear and concise information combined with flexibility can give a better outcome when speaking with family and friends.
- It is better to plan ahead and make a list so that you can get concerns addressed when speaking with healthcare providers.
- Improving communication is an ongoing process; be open to feedback so you can use it to improve your skills.

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Final Words

- Over the past 4 weeks we have encouraged the use of specific caregiver skills.
- But like any skills, they require practice.
- Practice them until they become part of your life.

Continue with the positive activities and self-care so that when you need to depend on your ability to bounce back from a crisis, those reserves will be there for you as well.

Congratulations on completing the BRIGHT workshop!

Please complete this short poll about this workshop.
We use your thoughts and suggestions to keep this workshop relevant.

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