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## Ground Rules

-  **TIME**  
90 minutes long  
May need to interrupt
-  **PARTICIPATION**  
Is voluntary but,  
Best way to learn
-  **PRIVACY**  
Said in the group,  
Stays in the group
-  **SURROUNDINGS**  
Check screen visibility,  
Reduce noise
-  **IF DUTY CALLS**  
Leave to do what you need  
Come back when you can

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## Introductions




Your Name

Who you are caring for and their diagnosis


One thing you hope to learn today

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## Today's Topics



Empathy as the Foundation of Communication



Communication and Memory Loss



Communication with Family & Friends

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## Empathy

Empathy is the ability for someone to 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

***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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## Discussion: Experiencing Empathy

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 & Memory Loss

### **Memory loss affects communication**

- It's harder to understand what is said
- It's harder to say what they want to say
- It's harder to find the right words
- It's hard 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 the person you are caring for.
- Don't tell the person what they cannot do.



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## Getting Help from Friends and Family

### Prepare

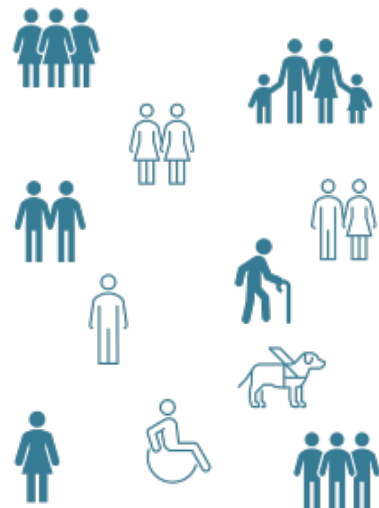
- Examine your needs
- Who are you going to ask?

### Ask

- State the **problem**
- Use **'I' Statements**
- Don't be afraid to **negotiate**
  - **Break it down** into smaller chunks
  - Be **persistent yet flexible**
  - **Don't give up!**
- Use **facts**
- Give **specific details**

### Follow Through

- **Confirm** before event
- **Prepare** emergency info



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## Getting Help from Friends and Family

**Think of the last time you asked someone for help.**

Were you successful?

How hard was this for you to do?

Did you use any of the strategies suggested?

What part did you find easy?

What part did you struggle with?

What can you do to make it easier for you to ask?

What barriers might the person have that you are ask?

Is this something you would do at home with your own family?

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## Family Meetings-Routine Communications

**Who's invited?**

**Make an agenda before the meeting**

**Start with any updates on symptoms or new diagnosis and resulting issues**

**Then problem solve for issues**

**Make an action plan and make sure everyone understands responsibilities**

**Not a one time thing**

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## Strategies for Dealing with Family Conflict

**Attempt to understand the family member you're in conflict with**

**Understand why you are in conflict**

**Keep yesterday's battles out**

**Realize they may not be ready**

**Bring in a professional**



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## Family Conflict Resolution

**Make sure everyone is in the loop**

**Practice effective listening skills**

**Let any anger subside**

**Avoid these 4 negative communication styles**

**Problem Solving Steps**

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## Take Away

- Empathy is a skill we work on throughout our lifetime.
- Caregivers need to shift expectations 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
- There are strategies that can help with family conflict: increased communication, family meetings, or professional mediator.

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## Making This Work for You

Pick One

### Practice Your Empathy

Stretch your mind and practice walking in another's shoes. What if you woke up one morning in the body and the life of someone else? Find a stranger and imagine what this would be like. What would it feel like to be them? How would you cope? Do next?



### Reaching Out to Family or Friends

Using the skills learned here, reach out and ask someone for help in a caregiving task. Whether it is to give you time to get a task done, to handle paperwork you just can't wrap your mind around, or to visit so you can get a break.

Set a Deadline

Be realistic in your deadline.

Why this one?

How will this help you?

What will you pair it with?

Do it with something you already do.


Optional Break it Down

Take a large task and break it into step.

Reminders

Phone Alarms  
Post-Its  
Make Visible

Run into Problems Getting it Done?

 ID the issue  
Brainstorm solutions  
Try it out

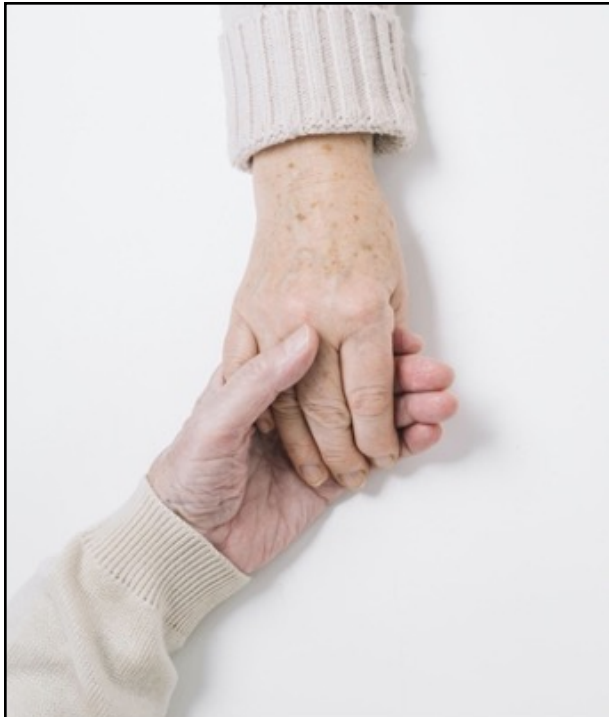
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Before  
you leave,  
Please  
complete  
our poll.



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**Thank You!**

Do you have any questions?

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