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National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners

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Tips for First Responders.

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People with Cognitive Disabilities

Say:

- My name is? I'm here to help you, not hurt you.
- I am a ? (name your job).
- I am here because? (explain the situation).
- I look different than my picture on my badge because? (for example, if you are wearing protective equipment).

Show:

- Your picture identification badge (as you say the above).
- That you are calm and competent.

Give:

- Extra time for the person to process what you are saying and to respond.
- Respect for the dignity of the person as an equal and as an adult (example: speak directly to the person).
- An arm to the person to hold as they walk. If needed, offer your elbow for balance.
- If possible, quiet time to rest (as possible, to lower stress/fatigue).

Use:

- Short sentences.
- Simple, concrete words.
- Accurate, honest information.
- Pictures and objects to illustrate your words. Point to your ID picture as you say who you are, point to any protective equipment as you speak about it.

Predict:

- What will happen (simply and concretely)
- When events will happen (tie to common events in addition to numbers and time, for example, "By lunch time" "By the time the sun goes down").
- How long this will last? when things will return to normal (if you know).
- When the person can contact/rejoin loved ones (for example calls to family, reuniting pets).

Ask for/Look for:

- An identification bracelet with special health information.
- Essential equipment and supplies (for example wheelchair, walker, oxygen, batteries, communication devices [head pointers, alphabet boards, speech synthesizers, etc.]).
- Medication.

- Mobility aids (for example, assistance or service animal).
- Special health instructions (for example allergies).
- Special communication information (for example, is the person using sign language)
- Contact information.
- Signs of stress and/or confusion (for example, the person might say [s] he is stressed, look confused, withdraw, start rubbing their hands together).
- Conditions that people might misinterpret (for example, someone might mistake Cerebral Palsy for drunkenness).

Repeat:

- Reassurances (for example, You may feel afraid. That's OK. We're safe now.)
- Encouragement (for example, "Thanks for moving fast. You are doing great.. Other people can look at you and know what to do").
- Frequent updates on what's happening and what will happen next. Refer to what you predicted will happen, for example: "Just like I said before, we're getting into my car now. We'll go now."

Reduce:

- Distractions. For example, lower the volume of the radio, use flashing lights on a vehicle only when necessary.

Explain:

- Any written material (including signs) in everyday words.
- Public address system announcements in simple words.

Share:

- The information you've learned about the person with other workers who'll be assisting the person.

Source:
http://www.hhs.gov
United States Department of Health and Human Services

Notice: While certification promotes and maintains quality, it does not license, confer a right or privilege upon or otherwise define the qualifications of anyone in the healthcare field.

Practitioner - *one who practices a profession*
Merriam Webster Dictionay

"Someday there will be a cure for Alzheimer's Disease. Until that day, continue with your dementia education. They deserve your best!"
Sandra Stimson NCCDP CEO

"Don't just meet the minimum state regulations regarding dementia education...exceed them!"

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