

# Caregiver Assistance News

*"Caring for You - Caring for Others"*

**Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike,  
Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

[www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org) **Helping You Age Better!**



**NOVEMBER 2014**

## For Better Communication - Listen Carefully

Communication is an art and a skill. It is not just about talking. Most of our actions are unspoken words that contribute to communication. Even the tone of our voice can mean more than the words that we actually say. Singing, dancing, hugging, holding, and other body actions are some of the ways we can communicate to people in our care who have lost the ability to understand spoken or written language.

It is important to let other people feel that they are respected, so treat them with dignity by not talking down to them. Take care to use a lower pitch of voice rather than a high pitch, which can sound like you were talking to a child.



### **Listening: More Important than Talking**

Have you ever acted like you were listening to someone who was talking, but in reality you were thinking about what you were going to say to the other person when it's your turn to talk or thinking about something else? Many of us are guilty of not really listening to what others say. Ways to improve listening skills:

- Try not to interrupt someone who is talking.
- Try to really hear their words and repeat back what they have said. This way, they know that you really heard what they said. (Then they might also be more willing to listen to you.)
- Avoid being defensive.
- Remember to show respect to the other person - even if you do not agree with their actions or words.

Effective communication leads to mutual understanding. It helps both parties find a solution to a problem. This means that your goal is not to win an argument or prove that you are right, but to reach an understanding.

## November is National Caregiver Support Month!

Thank You to all family caregivers for the valuable role you play when Care Comes Home! For more information, log on to [www.caregiveraction.org](http://www.caregiveraction.org) for valuable resources, advice from caregiver voices, peer support, and additional information.



## Being Understood

There are many challenges in communication. Sometimes, when you talk to a person in your care, you are not sure if they understand you. Sometimes, it also happens that you do not understand what they want to communicate. No matter how difficult these challenges are, do not give up trying to understand and being understood.

### Hearing Impairments

A person with hearing loss may appear like they are slow or uninterested. Check if they are using their hearing aid. To make communication effective:

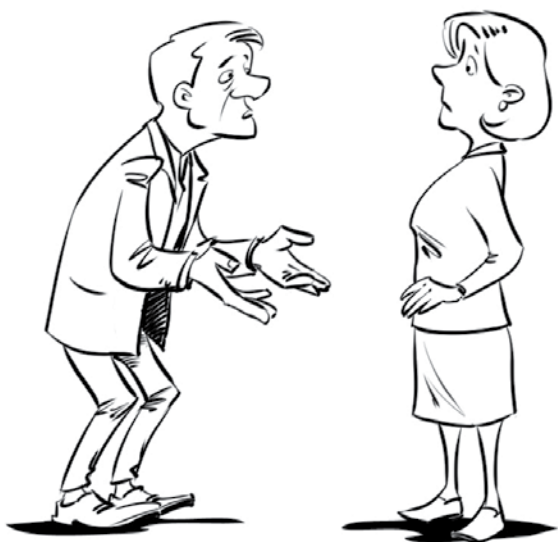
- Be in a position where you are at eye level with the person. Make eye contact while facing the person.
- Allow the other person to see your face in the light so they can see your facial expression and lip movements.
- Avoid startling a person. Approach them from the front and say who you are as you approach.
- Call them by name.
- Speak in simple language, using normal tone. Do not shout or use a high pitch.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Don't interrupt the person while they are talking.
- Use appropriate body language (pointing, nodding, etc) and facial expressions.
- Aside from their hearing aid, some people need their eyeglasses to see you better when communicating. Make sure they have these and that they are working properly.



### Signs of Hearing Loss

- The volume of the TV and radio is always very loud.
- You have to repeat yourself several times to be heard.
- They often misunderstand what you are saying.

Someone who has a serious hearing problem may withdraw from others because of embarrassment. Because of this, they can become isolated and depressed. Consult a skilled audiologist who can suggest listening devices for hearing impairments.



"I understand what you are saying, but I just don't understand what you **mean**."

## Have You Had Your Flu Shot?

Flu season is here again. Be sure that both you and the person in your care do not catch it by having a flu vaccination. For more information about the flu, log on to [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).



"What you **do**, not say, often says it all."

# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

## Changing Behaviors One Step at a Time —

Sometimes, we are not aware that our behaviors can affect other people's behaviors. To be able to make changes in our interactions with others, we must try to improve on our behaviors one step at a time. Try these simple steps:



- Be generous with compliments. Do not wait for others to do significant accomplishments before you give them a positive feedback. Say something nice whenever you catch them doing a good job, no matter how small.
- Be generous with your smiles. A smile can be encouraging for someone who is struggling to do some task and can foster self-esteem.
- Do not allow yourself to nurture negative thoughts. Try this trick: wear a rubber band on your wrist for a week. Snap it against your wrist whenever you catch yourself thinking unkind thoughts.
- Accept others for who they are and avoid being critical of them.

## Don't Fall - Be Safe!

Use footwear that is suitable for the weather. Sometimes, the safest route is not always the fastest route. Play it safe and avoid steep hills, cracked sidewalks and uneven surfaces.



## Alzheimer's Association Support Programs alzheimer's association™

### Understanding and Dealing with Alzheimer's Disease or Another Dementia

*This program will provide an opportunity for families and caregivers to learn and ask questions about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, while receiving support from others in similar situations.*

*Program is free of charge. No registration required.*

**Jackson County: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm at Four Winds Nursing Facility in Jackson or Jenkins Care Community in Wellston (noted below)**

December 18th - Open Discussion (Four Winds)

January 15, 2015 - Making the Transition from Home to a Care Facility (Jenkins)

**Scioto County: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm at Best Care Nursing and Rehab in Wheelersburg**

December 9th - Understanding Challenging Behaviors

**For more information about these programs and other similar programs available in or near your community, or for assistance with registering, please call Melissa Dever, LSW, from the Alzheimer's Association, at (740) 710-1821 or 1-800-272-3900.**



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## **Safety Tips - *Alzheimer's Disease Communication***

People with Alzheimer's disease have their own reality, so do not try to reason with them. Remain calm to keep them calm. It is important to remember to respond to their emotions, and not to their behavior. To help them understand you:

- Make sure to have a quiet environment with minimal background noise.
- Call the person by name and remind them of your name.
- Point to an object and say, "Do you want a sweater?" instead of saying "Do you want this?"
- Avoid using expressions that may cause confusion. For example, do not say, "jump into the shower." Instead, say, "step into the shower."
- Communicate using body language. Let your hands do the talking. Show friendship by shaking hands, announce your presence by touching their shoulder, or point to a seat where you want them to sit.

