

## **Communication Skills for Effective Dementia Care**

The importance of maintaining effective communication with a person with dementia (PwD) cannot be over emphasised when providing training for those in caring roles. This book outlines the 'Communication and Interaction Training' (CAIT) framework developed by the authors for healthcare staff and family members drawing from the strength-based relationship approach.

The first six chapters constitute part one and address the contents of the CAIT framework using the analogy of a wheel where the hub represents the core communication skills and the rim the more sophisticated communication strategies. The spokes represent activities of daily living and the level of assistance needed to help meet those needs.

The training programme has at its heart the concept of unmet need and the importance of meeting those needs. They use CBT (cognitive behaviour therapy) to help carers/staff understand the person's thoughts and feelings and RAM (Reduce the emotion; Assess the need and Meet the need) to facilitate a calm and constructive approach.

In part two other communication experts outline their approach. Teepa Snow's Positive Approach to Care™ aims to increase staff/carers understanding of what it is like to live with dementia. She describes two central concepts GEM™, a six-item rating highlighting the strengths of PwD and the Positive Physical Approach™, a practical set of steps of how to engage and interact in a person-centred way.

Luke Tanner, a massage therapist, body psychotherapist and dementia trainer discusses promoting consent to touch while giving personal care. This is an interesting and helpful exploration into the factors that lead to successful consent namely the relationship, type of touch, situation and body language. He stresses the importance of getting to know the individual.

The difficulty of facilitating communication in someone with advanced dementia is addressed by Maggie Ellis and Arlene Astell, the final contributors. They outline an approach they developed through research known as Adaptive Interaction. It believes that those with advanced dementia continue to retain a desire and an ability to communicate. A non-verbal communication technique, its elements include turn-taking, sounds, movements, facial expressions, touch, smiling and laughter.

This book is quite readable and practical. It has a structured layout with many subheadings that help explain and locate its ideas and topics quickly. The many case studies assist the reader to understand the practical applications. While it does not have much background theory it provides adequate references for further reading. This book should be read by all those concerned with supporting the communication needs of PwD.