# DINING AND DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNICATION

McKenna Kephart University of Iowa College of Nursing

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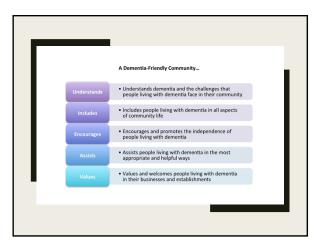
### Goals

- To briefly describe Dementia-Friendly Communities
- To discuss how dementia may impact people using food services in senior living settings
- To describe behaviors that may signal a person is confused and may need extra support
- To discuss your role in helping someone who may have dementia to be as successful as possible in their dining experiences

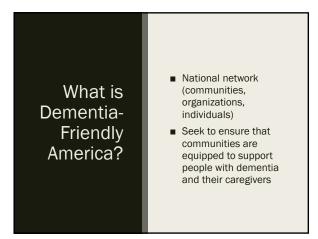
What is a Dementia-Friendly Community? A place or culture where people with dementia and their caregivers/families are:

- Empowered
- SupportedIncluded
- Understand their rights
- Recognize their full potential
- Are provided with options that foster quality of life

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#### Challenges/Changes in Communication with Dementia

- Varies day-to-day
- Trouble word-finding
- Describes objects rather than names them
- Loses train of thought
- Relies on gestures more than words

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Common Losses in Dementia-Impact on Use of Food Services

- Confusion over the menu
- Inability to choose what to order/frustration if faced with too many choices
- Agitation over noisy environment/being distracted by noise or people

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- people waiting behind them
- Looking lost/confused about where to sit or how to order food
- Getting mixed up trying to go through a buffet line
- Difficulty making correct payment

#### General Tips for Effective Communication

- Get a person's full attention before you speak
- Pay attention to your body language- a person can sense if you are tense/stressed
- Don't rush; give time for a person to to decide/order
- Use a friendly tone/humor when appropriate
- Don't make assumptions about a person's ability to communicate

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### Tips for Communicating with Persons Who May Have Dementia

- If someone seems to be having trouble understanding you:
  - Speak at a slightly slower pace with short and simple sentences
  - Try to rephrase rather than repeat
  - Suggest a word if necessary

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#### Tips for Communicating with Persons Who May Have Dementia

- If choices seem to be overwhelming someone:
  - Keep choices to a minimum
  - Ask questions in a way that allows yes or no answers
  - Avoid asking too many questions or complicated questions with many choices
  - Give the person time to respond

## Dining/Mealtime Tips

- Limit distractions
- Keep the table setting simple
- Be flexible to food preferences
- Offer simple/limited choices and redirect
- Give the person plenty of time to eat
- Make the most of the person's abilities

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# Dining/Mealtime Tips

- Offer words you think they may be trying to say
- Offer to help them find a place to sit/help them find their table if they are looking confused/lost
- Apologize and avoid arguing
- If they give the wrong amount of money, help them count out the correct amount of change

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### Dining/Mealtime Environment

- Comfortable temperature of the room
- Easy to reach utensils/only utensils they will need
- Minimize clutter at the table
- Calm atmosphere (as possible)
- Keep noise to a minimum

