


DINING AND DEMENTIA- FRIENDLY COMMUNICATION

McKenna Kephart
University of Iowa College of Nursing

1

Overview

- This program is designed for staff who support and provide food services in senior living



2

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

3

What is a Dementia-Friendly Community?

A place or culture where people with dementia and their caregivers/families are:

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

4

A Dementia-Friendly Community...

Understands	Understands dementia and the challenges that people living with dementia face in their community
Includes	Includes people living with dementia in all aspects of community life
Encourages	Encourages and promotes the independence of people living with dementia
Assists	Assists people living with dementia in the most appropriate and helpful ways
Values	Values and welcomes people living with dementia in their businesses and establishments

5

What is Dementia-Friendly America?

- National network (communities, organizations, individuals)
- Seek to ensure that communities are equipped to support people with dementia and their caregivers

6

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

7

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

8


Common Losses in Dementia- Impact on Use of Food Services

- Feeling rushed if they are in a line to order/buffet line since there are 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

9

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



10

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

11

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

12

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

13

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

14

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

15

Case Study

- There is an older woman standing in the center of the dining area looking a bit confused. She doesn't seem to know what to do. How could you support her dining experience?

16

Case Study

- Approach her, gain her full attention, and ask her if she has found a seat yet. Offer to show her to a table. Seat her away from distractions/noise. Offer her a menu, and perhaps point out a few popular dishes to make her choice less overwhelming.

17

Summary

- Dementia-Friendly Communities
- Challenges/changes in communication with dementia and their impact on use of food services
- General and dementia-specific communication and dining environment tips

18