



# It's All in Your Approach: Making Positive Connections

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## Teepa Snow's Philosophy

# Positive™ Approach to Care

## The Positive Approach to Care encourages Care Partners to:

- Respond to a person's change in cognition and abilities in a way that is not hurtful or offensive.
- Understand that, with practice, common *reactions* to the person with dementia can become thoughtful *responses* that improve the quality of life for everyone involved.
- Recognize that the person with dementia is *doing the best they can* and that if something isn't working, it's the responsibility of the Care Partner to change their approach and behaviors toward the person with dementia.
- Notice the environment surrounding the person with dementia and make changes as necessary.



# Today's Agenda

- Examine five sensory input systems
- Examine dominant role of vision
- How dementia affects sensory awareness and processing
- What is the Positive Physical Approach (PPA)
- Communication and Connection Tips
- Using Hand under Hand (HuH) techniques to help and connect
- Q&A

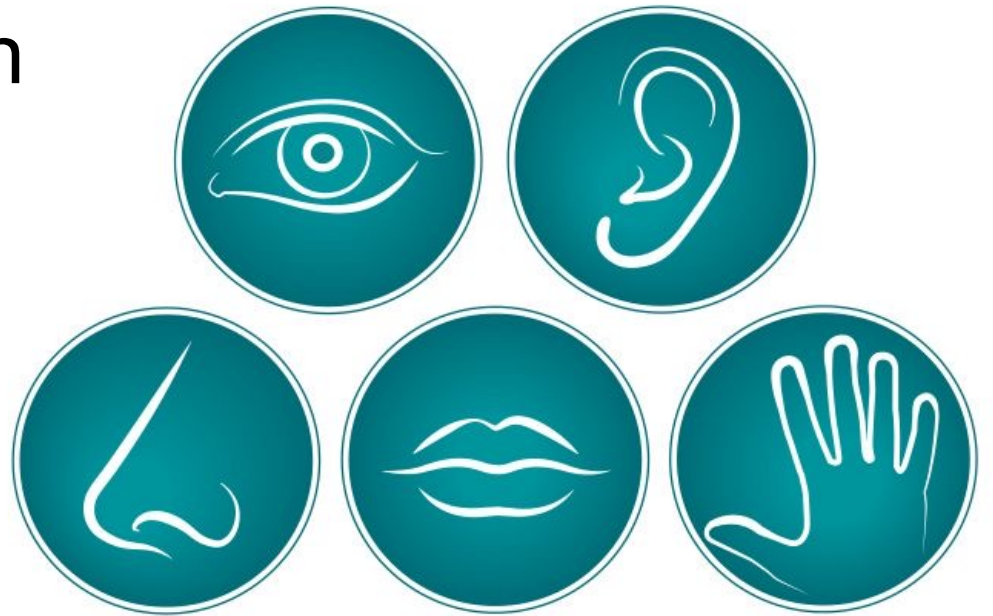
# Introduction: Beliefs

- The relationship is most critical, not the outcome of one encounter
- We are a key to make life worth living
- People living with dementia are doing the best they can
- We must be willing to change ourselves

# 5 Senses

## How Humans Take In Data

1. What you see
2. What you hear
3. What you feel/ touch
4. What you smell
5. What you taste



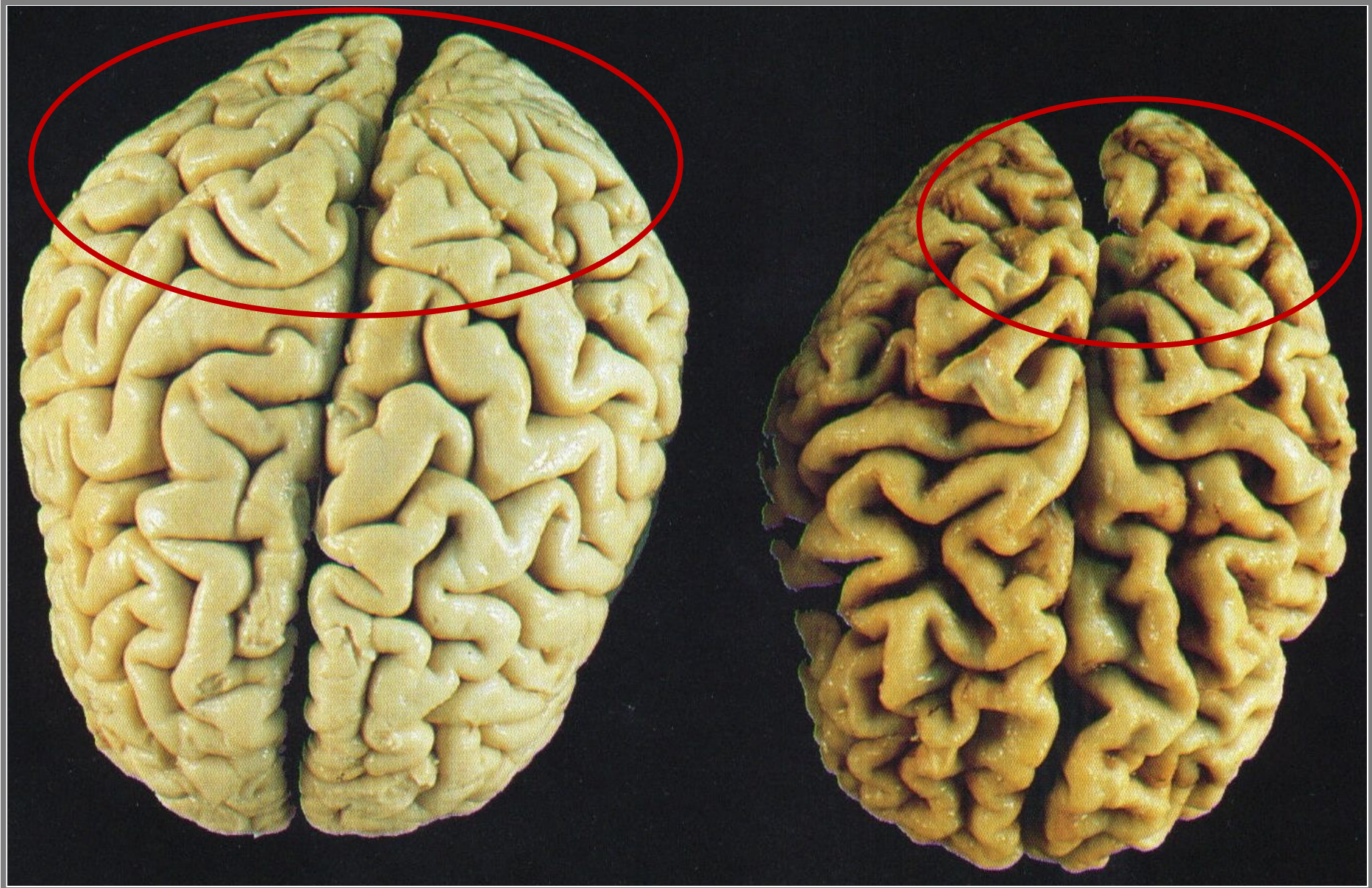
# Visual Data



- **The most powerful sensory input.**

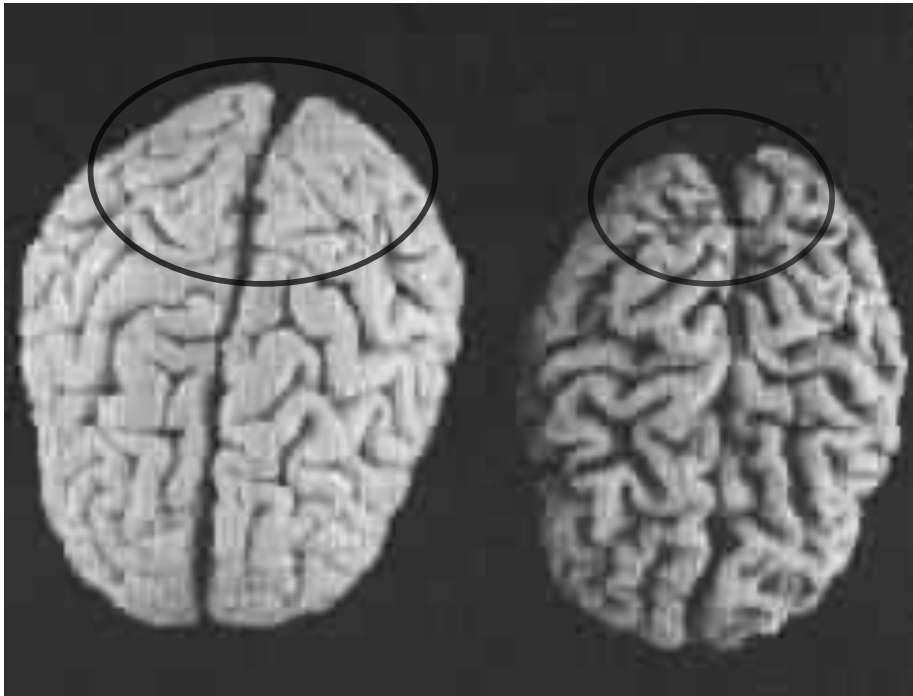
*People with dementia pay more attention to what they see than what they hear.*

# Vision Center – BIG CHANGES





# Vision



## Losses

- Edges of vision – peripheral field
- Depth perception
- Object recognition linked to purpose
- SLOWER to process – scanning & shifting focus

## Preserved

- ‘See’ things in middle field
- Looking at... curious

# Peripheral Awareness Changes

What does it mean for how I see the world?



**Normal aging  
peripheral  
awareness  
change**



**Early to late dementia peripheral awareness changes**

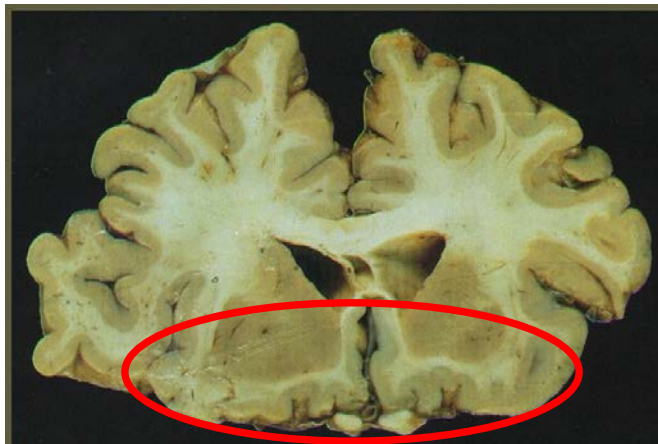
My field of active awareness shrinks from tunnel to monocular vision.



I am unaware of the things and people outside this field. I don't see you when you think I do. I don't see objects that you think I should so I trip on them.

# Right & Left Temporal Lobes: Language Processing Changes

Normal



Alzheimer's



RIGHT  
SIDE

LEFT  
SIDE

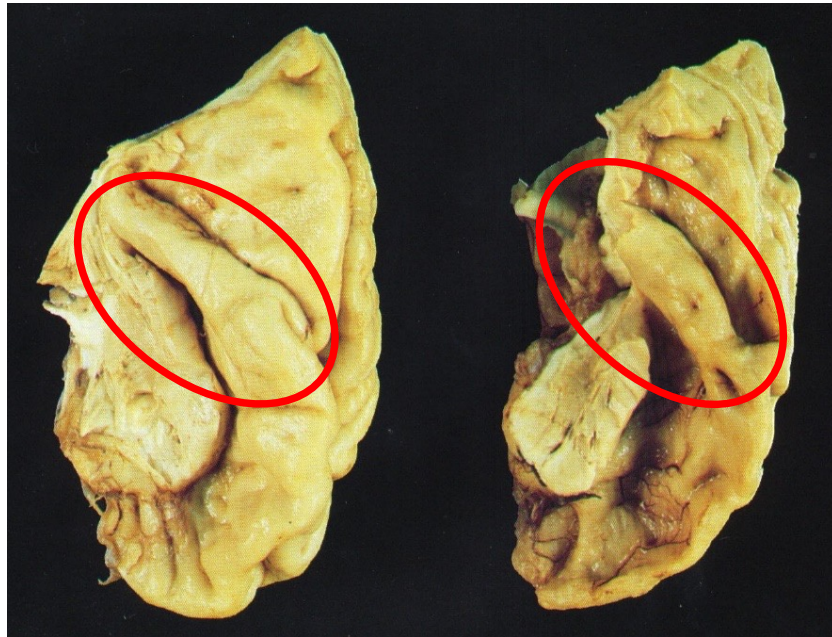
Language on the **LEFT** –  
**LOST**

- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Speech production

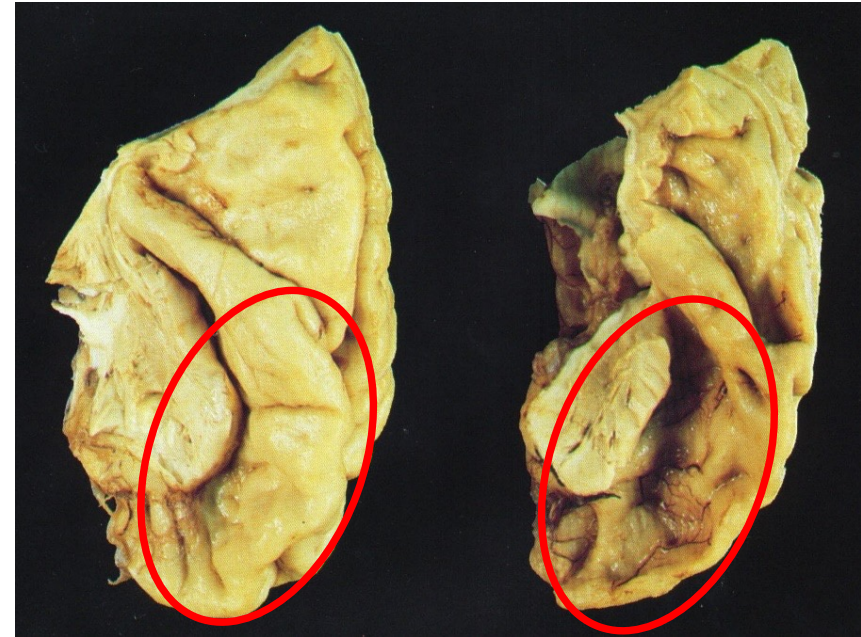
Rhythm on the **RIGHT** -  
**REMAINS**

- Social Chit-Chat
- Music, Poetry & Prayer
- Rhythmic Movement
- Forbidden words

# Language or Hearing Change?



**Hearing Sound –  
Not Changed**



**Understanding Language –  
BIG CHANGE**

# Auditory Data

- **What do we often do wrong?**

**Care partners like to talk... a lot!**

*The person with dementia is focused on how we look visually and they are not processing the content.*

# How Can We Give Information?

- 1) Visual Cues – Show**
- 2) Verbal Cues – Tell**
- 3) Tactile Cues – Touch**

**The order matters!**

# Positive Physical Approach™



## Positive Physical Approach™ Cheat Sheet

1. Get into **visual** range
2. Knock – announce self
3. **Pause** at edge of personal space (6 ft)
4. Greet and **smile**
5. Move **slowly** – hand offered in **handshake** position
6. Move from the front to the **side** – supportive stance
7. Greet with a handshake and your **name**
8. Slide into **Hand-under-Hand™** hold
9. Get **at or below** the person's eye level
10. Be friendly – make a **nice** comment or smile
11. Give your message... **simple, short, friendly**



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# 3 Zones of Human Awareness

- **Public Space** – 6 ft away or more
  - Visual Interactions & Awareness
- **Personal Space** – 6 ft to arm's length
  - Conversations & Friendship
- **Intimate Space** – within arm's reach
  - Intense Physical Closeness





# Step 1: Stop moving 6 ft out

- Pause at the Edge of Public Space
  - Stop moving - 6 ft
  - Let the person NOTICE you in public space  
(give them *time* to do this)
  - Acknowledge the person's OWNERSHIP of personal space
  - Respect their space!

## Step 2: Greet-Give 'hi' sign

- Bring flat, open palm up near face
  - Visual cue to look at you
- Say “HI!” and use preferred name, if known
  - Verbal cue to look at you
- Look Friendly
  - Smile
  - Make eye contact



## Step 3: Say name, offer hand

- Seek permission to enter **PERSONAL SPACE**
- **SHOW** person what you want to do
- Watch for their reaction/response
  - If there's hesitation
    - **STAY** in **PUBLIC** space
    - Turn your body **SIDEWAYS** – supportive stance
    - See what happens next – no better? hold back



## Step 4: Move slow

- Move Slowly toward the person
  - While offering your hand in greeting
  - Smile and look friendly
  - 1 second = 1 step
    - Respect SLOWED processing time
    - Decreased ability to do two things at one time

# Confrontational Stance

- If we stay standing in the front instead of moving to the side we can accidentally be perceived as confrontational. They may feel trapped.



- If we lean in closer so we can be seen clearly, it can feel like you are confronting them and is unsettling.



**Who in our lives stood this way to us?**

Authority figures!

Parents, teachers, bosses

# Step 5: Move into SUPPORTIVE stance

- Shift toward dominant side  
– hand shake side
- Turn your TRUNK sideways to the person
- Stay at ARM'S length
- Keep face & chest back
- You are not blocking their visual field and they don't feel trapped.



# Hand-under-Hand™



## Step 6: Hand-under-Hand™

- Go into Hand-under-Hand™ from a normal handshake
  - Provides protection for them AND you
  - Connects you with them while giving them a sense of control





## Step 7: Move to side, get low

- Get to their level
  - SIT, kneel, or squat
- Respect INTIMATE space
- Allow eye contact with limited visual field
  - Get focus on your face not your chest or middle



# If You Can't Get LOW...

- Stay greater than arm's length away
- Use Verbal Connections
- If it's not working, get a seat



## Step 8: Make connection

- Make friendly statement
- Wait for a response or acknowledgement
- Be sure you have a connection before you start your care



# Positive Personal Connections (PPC)



- 1. Greet or Meet:** introduce yourself and use their preferred name: “Hi\_\_\_I am \_\_\_” or “I am\_\_\_ and you are?”
- 2. Say Something Nice:** indicate something about them of value
- 3. Be Friendly:** share about you, then leave a blank
- 4. Notice Something:** point out something in the environment
- 5. Be Curious:** explore a possible unmet like, want, or need

## Step 9: Deliver a Message

- **Give visual cues first**
- **Offer verbal information next**
- **Use touching last and only if the person is aware of your plan**

# Positive Action Starters (PAS):

1. **Help:** Be sure to compliment their skill in this area, then ask for help.
2. **Try:** Hold up or point to the item you would like to use, possibly sharing in the dislike of the item or task, “Well, let’s try this.”
3. **Choice:** Try using visual cues to offer two possibilities or one choice with something else as the other option.
4. **Short and Simple:** Give only the first piece of information, “It’s about time to (first task).”
5. **Step by Step:** Only give a small part of the task at first, “Lean forward.”

## Positive Personal Connections (PPC)

Now that you are *in* using your PPA, take time to connect:

**Greet** – Introduce yourself and use their preferred name  
“I’m (your name), and you are \_\_\_\_?” or  
“Hi (preferred name) I’m (your name).”

**Compliment** – Indicate something about them of value  
“You are looking really colorful today!”

**Share** – First about you, then leave a blank  
“I’m from (state) and you’re from \_\_\_\_?”

**Notice** – Point out something in the environment  
“You must love (item) seeing how well you care for it.”

**Seek** – Explore a possible unmet like, want, or need  
“It’s a bit chilly in here, a hot drink would be nice. Do you prefer coffee or tea?”

## Positive Action Starters (PAS)

After you have taken time to connect, get started:

**Help** – Be sure to compliment his or her skill in this area, then ask for help with something  
“You are so good at \_\_\_\_, would you please help me?”

**Try** – Hold up or point to the item you would like to use, possibly sharing in the dislike of the item or task  
“Could we try this?”

**Choice** – Try using visual cues to offer two possibilities or one choice with *something else* as the other option  
“This or that?”

**Short and Simple** – Give only the first piece of information and offer a time frame of 1-5 minutes  
“It’s about time to (first task)”

**Step by Step** – Only give a small part of the task at once  
“Lean forward.”

# Hand-under-Hand™ Assistance

- Helps assist doing *WITH* not *for*
- *Protects* them and us!
- Helps direct gaze – eye-hand coordination
- Pressure in the palm is calming





# Hand-under-Hand™

**Protects aging, thin, fragile, forearm skin**



# High Risk



# Getting into Hand-Under-Hand® / HuH™

- Start from a handshake position
- Release fingers and hook thumbs
- Make a butterfly
- Close hands around the base of each others thumbs
- Care Partner's hand supports underneath: Hand-under-Hand
- Use your 3 skill fingers (thumb, pointer, middle) for tasks/tools



# Doing With: Hand-under-Hand® / HuH™

- Connecting – comforting and directing gaze
- Guiding and helping with movement
- Getting eye contact and attention
- Providing help with fine motor
- Offering a sense of control, even when you are doing almost everything

**Hand-under-Hand technique can be used to facilitate activities like:**

- Eating & drinking
- Walking & mobility
- Standing & sitting transitions
- Dressing & undressing
- Brushing teeth, washing, shaving, & other hygiene care
- Doing everyday crafts & activities



# Keep it SIMPLE

- USE VISUAL combined VERBAL (gesture/point)
  - ✓ “It’s about time for...”
  - ✓ “Let’s go this way...”
  - ✓ “Here are your socks...”
- DON’T ask questions you DON’T want to hear the answer to...
- Acknowledge the response/reaction to your information...
- LIMIT your words – SIMPLE is better always
- Wait, Pause, Slow Down



# Build Skill

- Positive Physical Approach™
- Supportive Communication
- Consistent & Skill Sensitive Cues
  - ✓ Visual, verbal, physical
- Hand Under Hand™
  - ✓ for connection
  - ✓ for assistance
- Open and Willing Heart, Head & Hands



# Approach Matters

## Use a consistent Positive Physical Approach™

- Pause at edge of public space
- Gesture and greet by name
- Offer your hand and make eye contact
- Approach slowly within visual range
- Shake hands and maintain Hand-Under-Hand™
- Move to the side
- Get to eye level & respect intimate space
- Wait for acknowledgement



# Supportive Communication

## Make a connection

- Offer your name – “I’m (NAME)... and you are...”
- Offer a shared background – “I’m from (place) ...and you’re from...”
- Offer a positive personal comment – “You look great in that ....” or “I love that color on you...”



# When Doing

- Do 'With'
- Give SIMPLE and Short Pieces of Information
- Offer concrete CHOICES
- Ask for HELP
- Ask the person to TRY
- Break the TASK DOWN to single steps at a time

# When Words Don't Work Well

## Hand-under-Hand™



- Uses established nerve pathways
- Allows the person to feel in control
- Connects you to the person
- Allows you to DO with not to
- Gives you advance notice of ‘possible problems’
- Connects eye-hand skills
- Use the dominant side of the person



## If what you are trying is **NOT** working...

- STOP
- Back off
- THINK IT THROUGH...
- Then, re-approach
- And try something slightly different



# Beliefs that Make a Difference:

- People with Dementia are Doing the BEST they can.
- Learn to DANCE with your partner.
- Be the KEY - make life WORTH living.
- What we choose to do MATTERS.
- Be willing to CHANGE ourselves.
- Be Responsive vs. Reactive to the Behavior.
- Be willing to STOP, take a Time Out & Try Again

# Positive Physical Approach™

- *To the tune of Amazing Grace*



**Come to the front, go slow**

**Get to the side, get low**

**Offer your hand, call out their name**

**Then wait.....**

**If you will try, then you will see**

**How different life can be**

**For those you're caring for.**



# Next Workshop

Session 3 – Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10am – noon

## Part I: Challenging Behaviors: Recognizing Unmet Needs



- Learn to understand which physical and emotional needs can cause challenging behaviors.
- Learn hands-on techniques to connect and comfort using visual, verbal, physical and emotional connections.
- Develop new skills related to approach, cueing, and ability to connect with people affected by dementia
- Help reduce the chance of future escalations and make your person with dementia feel at ease.

# Thank you!

Thank you so much for your desire to learn and your commitment to making a positive difference!

To learn more about the Hawaii Circle of Care for Dementia visit, <https://www.catholiccharitieshawaii.org/hawaii-circle-of-care-for-dementia/>

To learn more about the Teepa Snow and the Positive Approach to Care visit [www.teepasnow.com](http://www.teepasnow.com)

**Hale Ku'ike** is committed to dementia education for staff, and for the wider Hawaii community. Starting in 2020 Hale Ku'ike co-sponsored dementia education webinars with Catholic Charities and the recordings are available on-line at <https://www.catholiccharitieshawaii.org/caring-for-persons-living-with-dementia-webinars-and-presentations/>. Additional 2021 dementia workshop series recordings are available on our website at <https://www.halekuike.com/videos/#webinar>.



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