Dementia, Dining & Dignity at the Dinner Table

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Too often, aging services providers find that caregivers have not mastered the art & science of dementia communication, resulting in disheartening, undignified and even dangerous situations, especially during meals. When they should be experiencing the comfort of a familiar routine, persons with dementia are instead experiencing confusion, frustration, and anxiety.
Dignity?

Standing over

Not describing food

No interaction
Dignity?

Talking over or around the person as if they are not even there?
Doing a Quick Check

Task Talk
We have get you cleaned-up now.

No Talk
Interaction is wordless.

Staff Talk
Are you going on break pretty soon?

Person Talk & Dementia Cuing
Helen, I think you will like this!
Green beans with bacon!

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Dementia Communication Coaching for Dining
Dementia impacts dining. Here are a few of the things caregivers need to know.

Remembering what was ordered
Remembering which meal this is
Remembering why we are in this room
Remembering when the food will be coming

Initiating Eating
Switching Between Eating & Drinking
Adding Things: Sugar, Cream, Butter
Understanding what to do next.

Communicating Preferences
Initiating Conversations

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Aging impacts meal-time enjoyment. Here are a few of the things caregivers need to know.

- Significant Decrease in Taste Buds
- **Dry** Mouth
- Decreased Ability to **Smell**
- Age-Related **Hearing** Impairment
- **Dentures** reduce taste
- Blurring & Dulling of **Vision** – Food Colors Less Vibrant
- Special preparations – such as **Pureed & Ground** – take away familiar, recognizable textures
Good Morning Jane, I’m Kelly.

It’s time for breakfast.

We’re having oatmeal with brown sugar today!

I’ll take you to the dining room.

I’m going to turn you around.
Cuing Friendship

Gladys, I want you to meet a real cracker jack!

Helen, meet the one and only Estelle!

I think you two go a long way back.

You are the two best-looking women at the table!
Presenting the Meal

Below eye level

Eye contact first

Sparkling face

Simple Statements

Low pitch. No up-talking

Hot out of the oven!

I made it just for you!

Broasted chicken today!

Mashed potatoes with extra butter!

Green beans with bacon!
Coaching for Cuing...

Food Cuing – for appetite & pleasure

Reminiscing Cuing

Friendship Cuing

Describing what is coming next
Cuing instead of Doing
Getting it Right.
For more information about Dignity & Dementia Coaching

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