



Activity

Enjoying getting to know people is why most of us do the sort of work that we do. You already have lots of skills in getting to know people and helping people open up about themselves. You are interested and curious about what makes people tick. You know how to help people feel less anxious and distressed.

Often we take these core skills for granted. In dementia care we need to become more conscious of the skills we are using. If we think about communication as a game of tennis, and ourselves as the tennis coach, what are the skills that we use at each stage of the game? What are the core skills that you need to be an excellent coach?

Stage of the game	What would assist in success
<p><i>Pre-match preparation</i> Getting oneself prepared beforehand is going to increase the likelihood that the communication between you and the person with dementia is going to be successful. The more challenging that you expect the communication to be the more time you might want to spend getting yourself prepared.</p>	<p><i>What do you think are important tips about making sure the communication is likely to be a success?</i></p>
<p><i>The serve</i> You want to ensure that the person is going to be able to reach your serve! How might you open a communication or conversation?</p>	<p><i>What might be important things to consider in your approach to ensure that you get a good response?</i></p>
<p><i>Reaching the serve to return it</i> Your aim is to keep that ball bouncing back and forth between you. With someone with diminished communication skills sometimes you have to be quite acrobatic to do this! You have to pay close attention.</p>	<p><i>What do you need to be aware of when you are listening to the person's response?</i></p>
<p><i>Ensure your ball gets returned</i> Once you have established the communication, you have contact. The next stage is moving into maintaining contact.</p>	<p><i>What strategies can you use to continue to keep the communication going back and forth between you?</i></p>