



4D. APPROACHING & COMMUNICATING WITH PATIENTS & CLIENTS – SPECIAL CASES

A Person who is Confused

- ❖ Visit in a **quiet, distraction-free environment** if possible
- ❖ **Simplify your topic of conversation** to expect a simple “yes” or “no” response and ask one question at a time
- ❖ **Approach the person slowly in their line of sight**, touch them gently on the arm or shoulder before speaking to let them know you are there and use their name often
- ❖ **Speak clearly, not too quickly and maintain eye contact**, using minimal hand movements towards them
- ❖ **Never talk about someone in their presence** without including them in the conversation
- ❖ **Never talk to an adult as if to a child**. Do not patronise them, for example by patting them on the head or talking 'baby talk'
- ❖ If the person you are visiting is **unable to speak**, or their **speech is difficult to understand**
 - Resist the temptation to just say “yes”, nod or pretend to understand
 - Repeat key words if the person doesn't understand at first
 - Do not finish their sentences for them or rush them in any way
 - The appropriate communication strategy will vary considerably with the individual. A member of staff should be able to provide guidance regarding the best method to adopt
- ❖ Some people may have **limited attention spans**: watch for signs of uneasiness, restlessness, agitation or just ignoring you and end the visit on a positive note with a sense of closure
- ❖ **Encourage reminiscence**, which can provide a source of comfort as well as an 'anchor' to reality
- ❖ Always **retain a sense of humour** and cultivate a positive and accepting attitude