

A Quick Guide to Care & Support of People with Dementia



COVID-19

CVID-19

Reflecting the current circumstances, this resource provides simple advice about how we provide care and support for people with dementia.

It is what is says on the tin

THIS RESOURCE GIVES YOU SOME KEY POINTERS TO SUPPORT YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

NONE OF IT IS ROCKET SCIENCE & THE SCIENCE (OR REASONS FOR THE ADVICE) IS NOT EXPLAINED

REMEMBER, NO TWO PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA WILL EXPERIENCE IT IN THE SAME WAY.

SO THIS RESOURCE IS NOT PRESCRIPTIVE, MORE INFORMATIVE; BRINGING TOGETHER SOME WIDELY AGREED PRINCIPLES THAT MIGHT HELP.

HOW YOU CARE MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

Talk less!

As dementia progresses,
communication will change.

Words become less important.

How you say things makes a difference.

Use fewer, familiar words &
expressions.

Avoid keeping up a running
commentary whilst supporting with
tasks.

Simplify your language (without
becoming childlike).





Be friendly

SMILE AND HAVE AN OPEN BODY POSTURE.



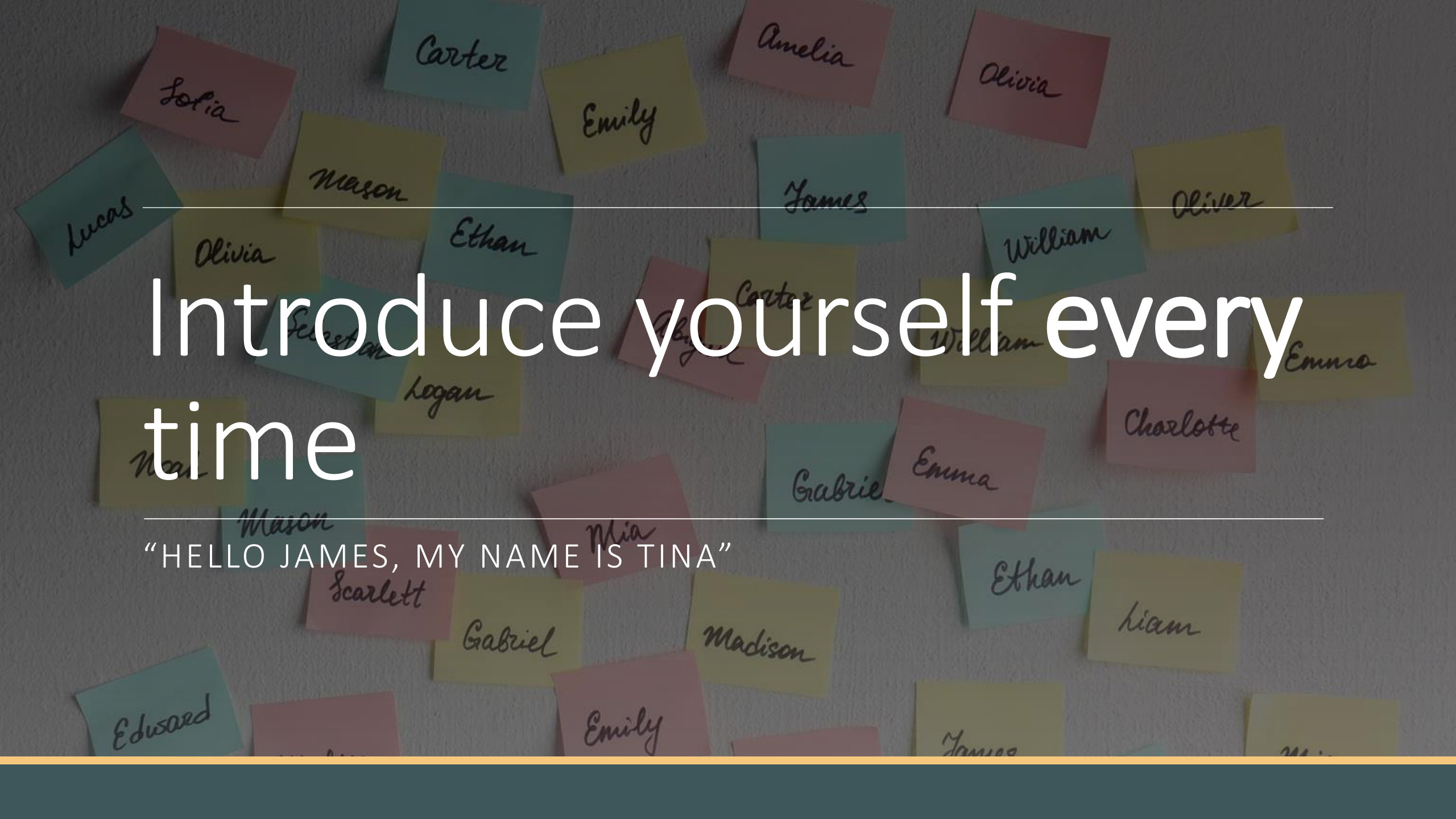
But respond to emotion

Living with dementia is hard & some days will be tougher than others.

If the person is feeling frustrated and you are smiling & jolly, there is a mismatch. The person may feel more frustrated as a result.

Adjust your approach to respond to the person's emotion.

They will *see* that you understand.



Introduce yourself every
time

“HELLO JAMES, MY NAME IS TINA”

Use the person's preferred name

Use the person's name to get (& maintain) their attention.

Use the preferred name. Some people may prefer Mr & Mrs.

Avoid the use of terms of endearment such as "love" or "sweetheart".

Never use terms such as "good girl" or "good boy".





Think about your positioning

GET DOWN TO THE PERSON'S
LEVEL, IN LINE OF SIGHT.

MAINTAIN SOCIAL
DISTANCING WHERE POSSIBLE

Be kind

Pay the person a compliment (in a way that they understand) and share a moment with them before doing anything.





Show don't tell

Use your nonverbal communication to support your words

“Jan, are you cold or hot?”

Show don't tell

Use real objects to support choices where possible.

“Jan, would you like a cup of tea?”





Show don't tell

Or consider the use of pictures or images.

“Jan, would you like a cup of tea?”

Get permission

Make sure you are checking consent as you go.

Explain in simple terms and check their response.

If you are unsure if they have understood, try again another way.



First things first

Break down activities into steps.

Give the person the first step.

Acknowledge that has been achieved "good" "well done".

And then give the next step.



What does that mean?

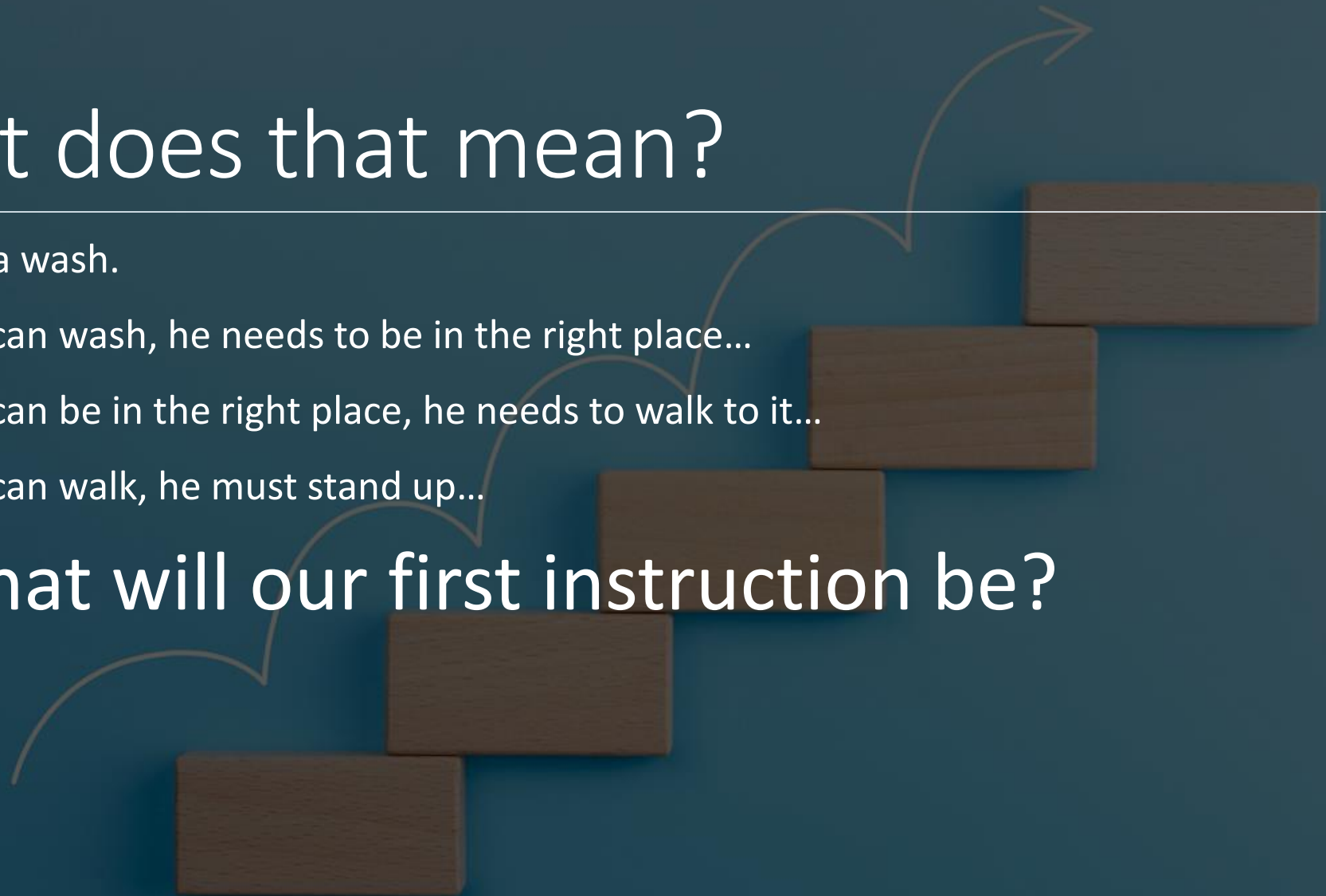
Les needs a wash.

Before he can wash, he needs to be in the right place...

Before he can be in the right place, he needs to walk to it...

Before he can walk, he must stand up...

So what will our first instruction be?





“Les, lean
forward”



Tell me about it

WHEN HAVING CONVERSATIONS, AVOID TOO MANY QUESTIONS WHICH NEED A “CORRECT” ANSWER

“TELL ME ABOUT” OPENS UP THE CONVERSATION AND ALLOWS THE PERSON TO TELL YOU WHAT THEY CAN



Listen carefully

NOT JUST TO THE WORDS, BUT THE MEANING BEHIND THE WORDS

REFLECT THE PERSON'S WORDS BACK, NOTING THE EMOTION.

Put the bits of the jigsaw together

When people are struggling to find the right words, you can often get the gist of what they are trying to say.

Give people time to process, don't be too quick to talk for the person but do help them out when there's a pause.

“you are talking about the **dog**”



Don't take it personally

See swearing as a means of communication.

As words become difficult to find, this may be the only way a person has left of expressing emotion.

The “filter” may be off, so the person may not recognize that this is not generally socially acceptable.

People may also call you names but try not to take it personally or “tell them off”.



Be aware of changes to vision

Our visual field shrinks as we age, but this is a more significant change for people with dementia.

They will experience tunnel vision, where they lose peripheral vision.





Because of the visual changes, people will not be seeing the whole picture.



People with dementia may not pick up on your emotions through your facial expression, but they will recognise a change in your tone of voice. They will hear that you are happy, cross or disinterested.

Look after yourself, to look after the person with dementia.



Be patient

Good dementia care takes time.

If things are not going according to plan, think about how you are supporting the person.

Ask yourself

- Have you greeted the person?
- Have you communicated effectively?
- Have you thought about your positioning?
- Have you helped them to understand what you are trying to help them with?

Make a change and try again.



Thank you for caring

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME IN LOOKING AT THIS RESOURCE AND FOR THINKING ABOUT HOW YOU CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA