



WELL AWARE

Your Weekly Wellness Resource

Brought to you by the *LCS Residential Health Services Resource Team*: Sharon Fay, Mary Sommer, and Beth Grigg. If you would like more information on the *Well Aware* wellness program, contact griggbeth@wyndemerelcs.com.

5 Ways to Better Conversations

Have you ever wondered, when spending time with a friend or family member, "What should I say? How should I act?" This can be especially challenging when your friend has a terminal health condition, has dementia, or suffers from other chronic health conditions.

Take your cues from the other person and let his/her comfort be your guide. David Solie, the author of *How to Say It to Seniors: Closing the Communication Gap with Our Elders*, states, "Someone who's very sick or dying is in a situation where their control is very limited. You do them a service and provide comfort by letting them direct the conversation without judging".



let's talk



Social

The focus of this week
is

Social Wellness.

Social Wellness refers to one's ability to interact with people around them.

It involves using good communications skills, having meaningful relationships, respecting yourself and others, and creating a support system that includes family members and friends.

Better Conversations

Here are five ways to be together in the moment:

Relax and let the conversation flow naturally.

Your friend might be feeling happy, angry, withdrawn, irrational, excited, or uncomfortable. Let the person express what he/she is feeling.

Follow the other person's agenda, not yours.

Skip the pep talks, expressions of pity, or speeches about your grief. Your goal is to understand and respect what the other person wants to talk about. Then follow his or her lead wherever it takes you.

Ask open-ended questions.

Here lies the powerful heart of good communication. Some examples:

- Tell me about your day...
- How are you doing? Tell me about it...
- What have you been thinking about?

Let the person speak and the conversation will evolve naturally.

Listen and show that you understand.

Reflective listening conveys, "I hear you and I get it". Playback what was said, or paraphrase the essence of what you heard.

Try telling stories.

Sharing tales about your shared past is a way to provide comfort. Try, "I'll never forget the time..." "Do you remember when...?" Stories convey the unspoken but important message, *You have helped me become the person I am today.* And that's something everyone needs to hear.

Paula Spencer Scott, author of *Surviving Alzheimer's: Practical Tips and Soul-Saving Wisdom for Caregivers.*

