



PROMOTING PERSONHOOD AND  
DIGNITY DURING HEALTH CARE VISITS:

Tips for You and Your Loved One

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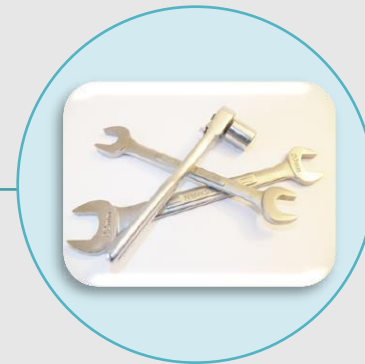
# Promoting Personhood



Why?



When?



How?

# Why?

- For the sake of our persons with dementia
  - Combatting stigma
  - Truth telling that reduces suffering
  - Meeting needs of identity, connectedness, security, autonomy, meaning, growth, joy\*
  - Promoting Personhood promotes well being\*

\*From Dr Al Power, [Dementia Beyond Disease](#)



Photo by [Johann Siemens](#)

# Why?



Photo by [Tim Rogers](#)

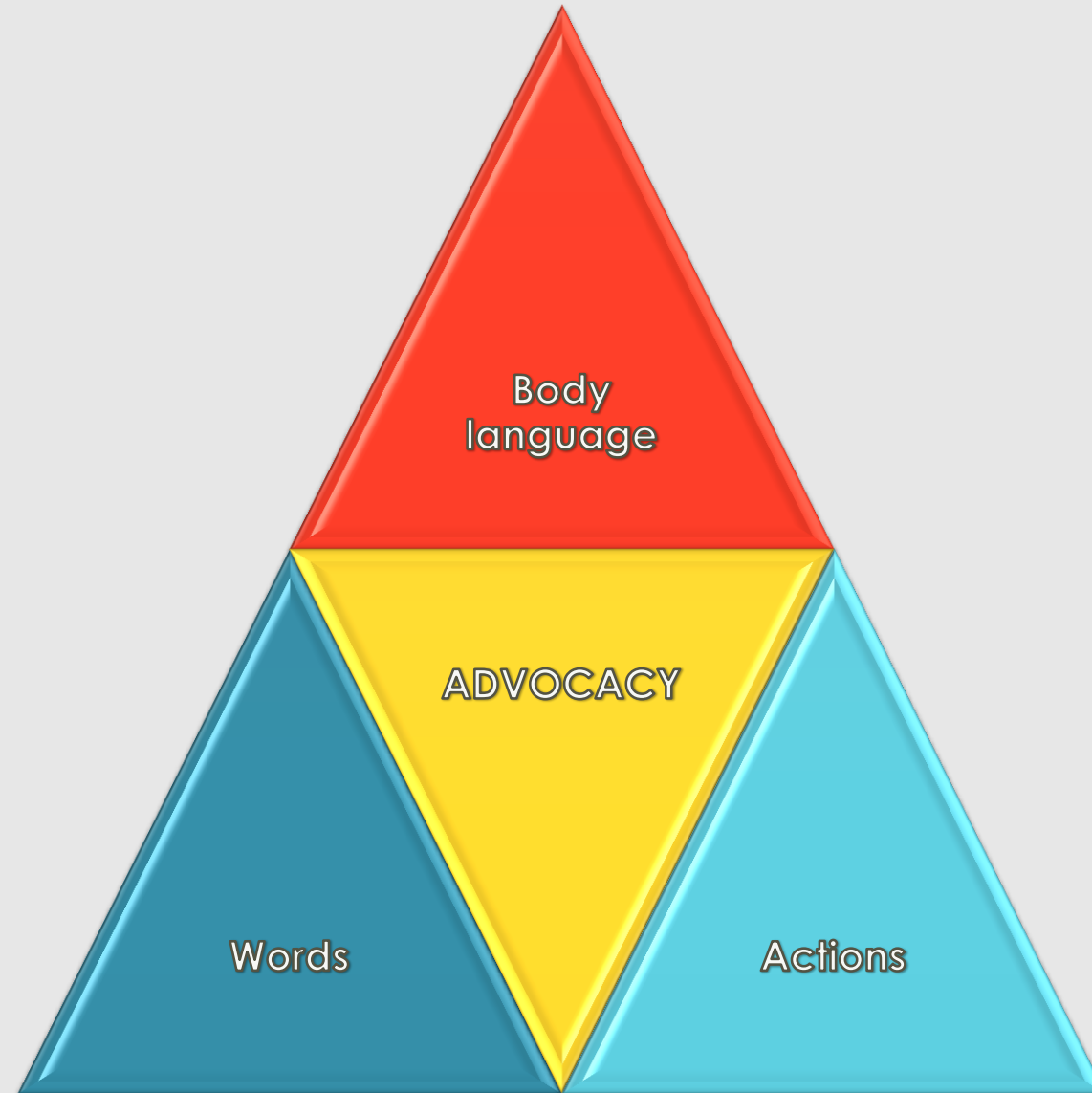
- For us as carers
  - To help in authentic ways
  - For warmth and closeness
  - To have a positive impact and not reinforce negative stereotypes
  - For satisfaction and meaning in our work/efforts
  - To build a legacy
  - To maintain a sense of control
  - To protect

# When?



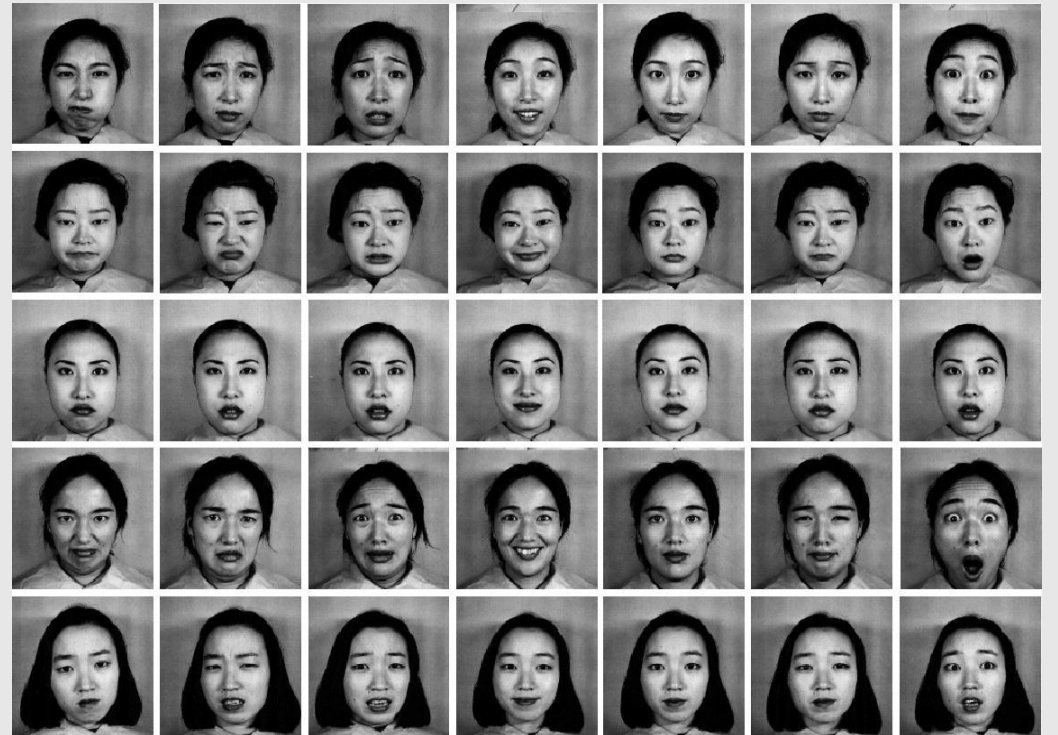
- Personhood, identity, needs, and our humanity exists in us all throughout our lives

How?



# How?

- [Differential] Body Language:
  - Presence
  - Facial expressions
  - Positioning
  - Eye contact
  - Timing of when we answer



# How?



- [Humanizing] Words:
  - Helping health care providers get to know our loved ones with dementia
  - Even when a question is directly asked of us, inviting the person with dementia to answer first
  - Recognizing the human needs for identity, connectedness, security, autonomy, meaning, growth, joy
  - Talking about stress/distress behaviors in relationship to unmet needs



# How?

- [Supporting] Actions

- Ask for improvements and acknowledge good practice:
  - Give feedback in person, fill out the survey, post online, write a note
- The serious and tough option: when all else fails, it's your right to walk away, to establish care with a new provider who can align better with your values



# Barriers



- Unrecognized bias
- Unconscious fears
- Uncharted territory for many health care providers
- Communication challenges
- Reduced insight
- Dynamic nature of being a carer and adapting to changing cognition and needs

# Dynamic advocacy



- Personhood promotion for our persons with dementia, to meet their needs and protect them from stigma
- For our carers, to meet needs for meaning and building a legacy, and to protect the relationship
- For health care providers, to meet needs for growth, overcoming bias and fear