



Communication with Older People

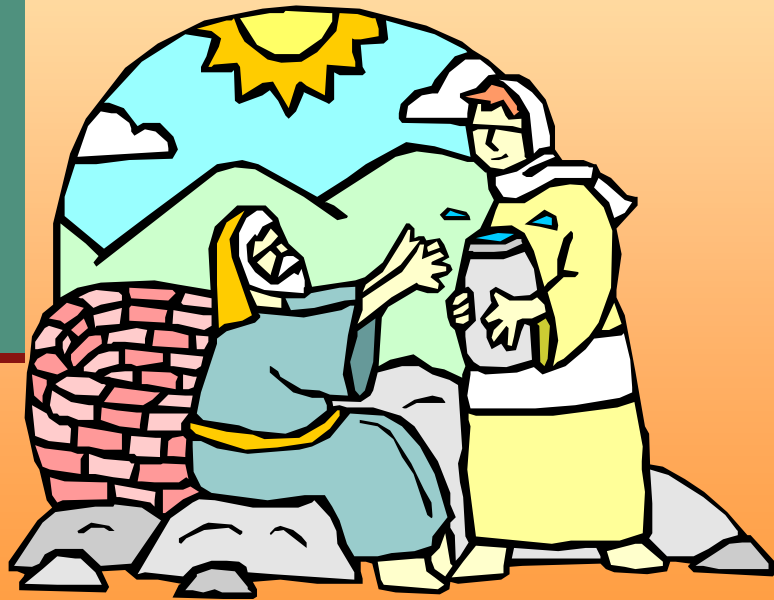
Communication

- Giving AND receiving of information



Why communicate?

- Important to everyone
- Basis of relationships



Components of Communication

- **Sender**
- **Message**
- **Receiver**
- **Response**
- **Medium / channel**
 - verbal
 - non-verbal



Verbal communication

- Verbal – spoken languages, dialects, songs...



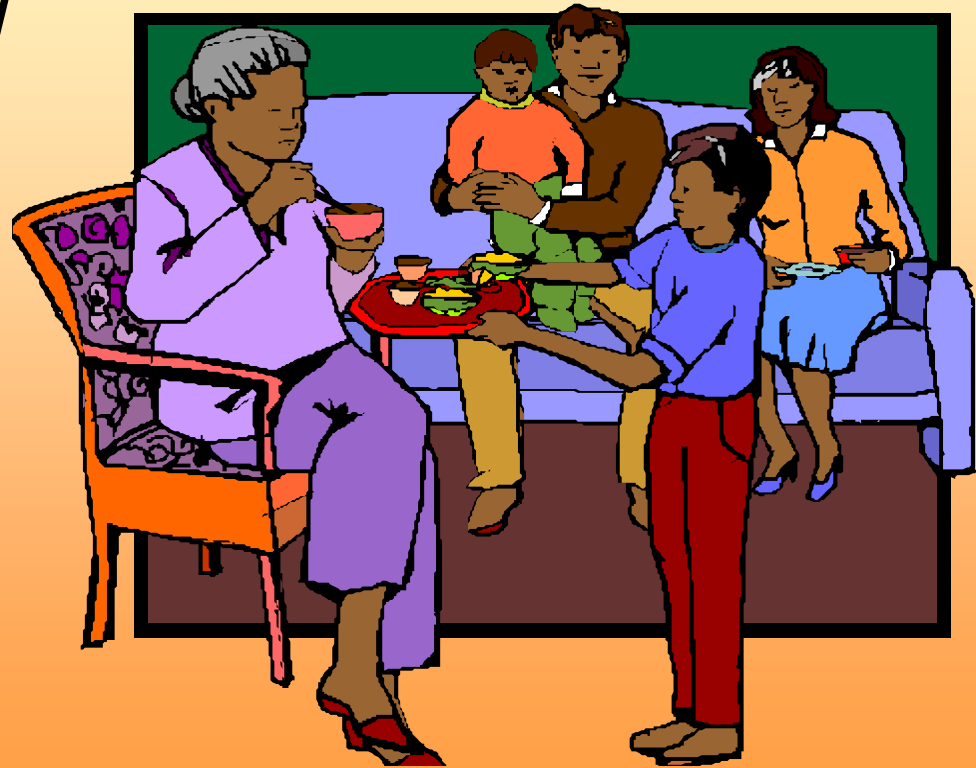
Non-verbal Communication

- **Non-verbal**
 - **Body language**
 - **Written words, pictures, diagrams**
 - **Photographs**
 - **Music**



The Older Person and Communication

- **Social / cultural / educational background**
- **Emotional state**
- **Language**



The Older Person and Communication

[cont.]

- **Illnesses e.g. stroke, dementia, Parkinson's Disease**
- **Physical changes**
- **Interest**



Physical Changes in Older People

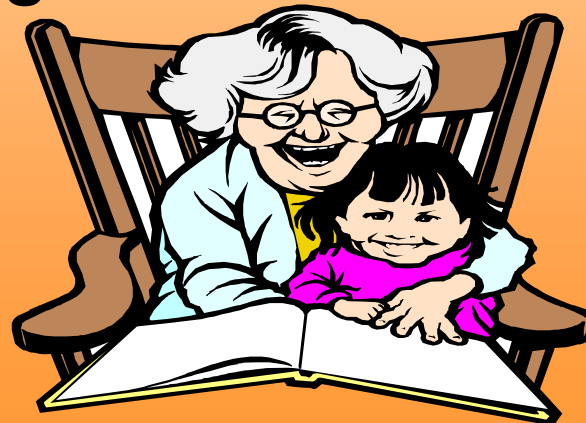
**We communicate with our whole body.
Any change or deterioration to our
senses affects communication.**

- **Vision**
- **Hearing**
- **Smell**
- **Touch**
- **Cognition**



Your 'Self' in communication

- Your feelings, perceptions and expectations of older persons are influenced by :
 - your past experiences, biases, knowledge and understanding of the older person and the ageing process



Your 'Self' in communication [cont.]

- **Aware**
- **Acknowledge**
- **Appreciate**
- **Accept**
- **Act**



Active Listening

- **“Listening” requires the volunteer to be silent most of the time and uses his/her senses to get the total message**
- **He/She listens with his/her ears to the words spoken and the tone of voice, with his/her mind to the underlying message, and with his/her eyes to the language of the body**
- **The volunteer also listens to himself/herself, he/she notes his/her reaction to the message which he/she is receiving and the way he/she is coping with it**

Environment / context and communication

Communication takes place in a context or an environment that needs to be relevant and conducive.



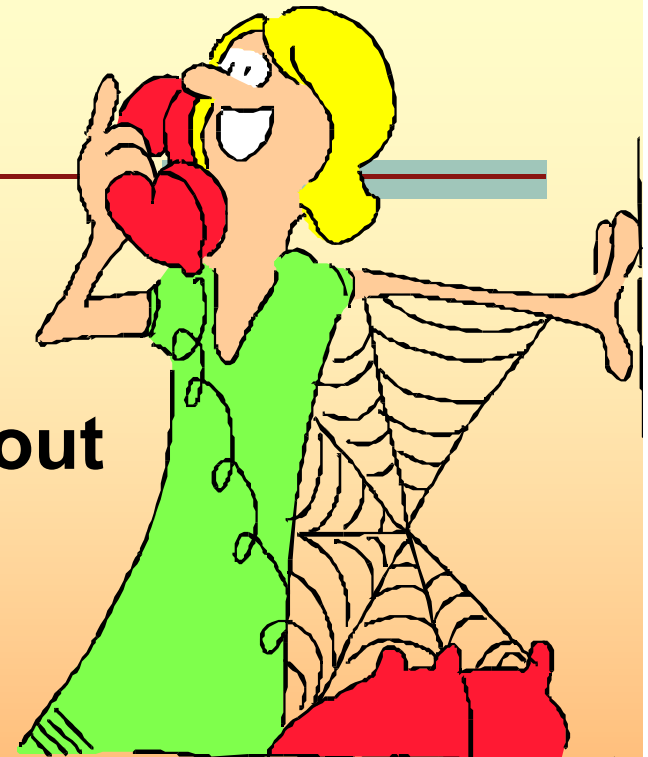
Practical Tips

- Approach from the front
- Speak on the side of the 'good' ear
- Encourage the use of hearing aid / glasses
- Communicate at face level
- Don't cover your lips



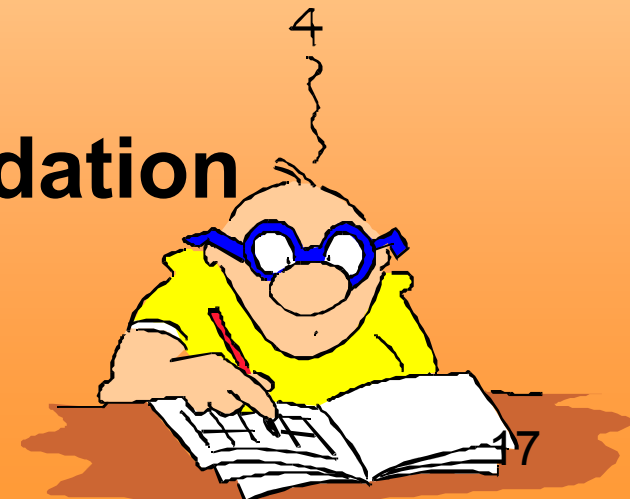
Practical Tips [cont.]

- Reduce background noise
- Relax
- Speak in low tone / don't shout
- Allow time to respond
- Speak slowly
- Use simple words and short sentences
- Combine verbal with non-verbal and other means of communication



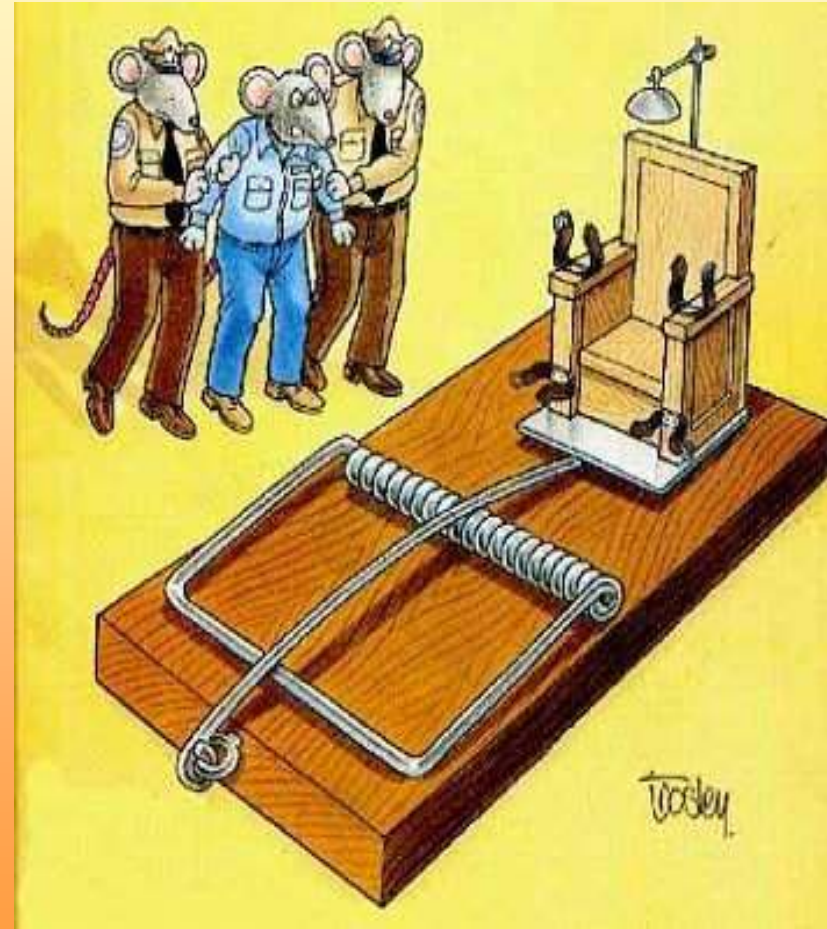
Practical Tips [cont.]

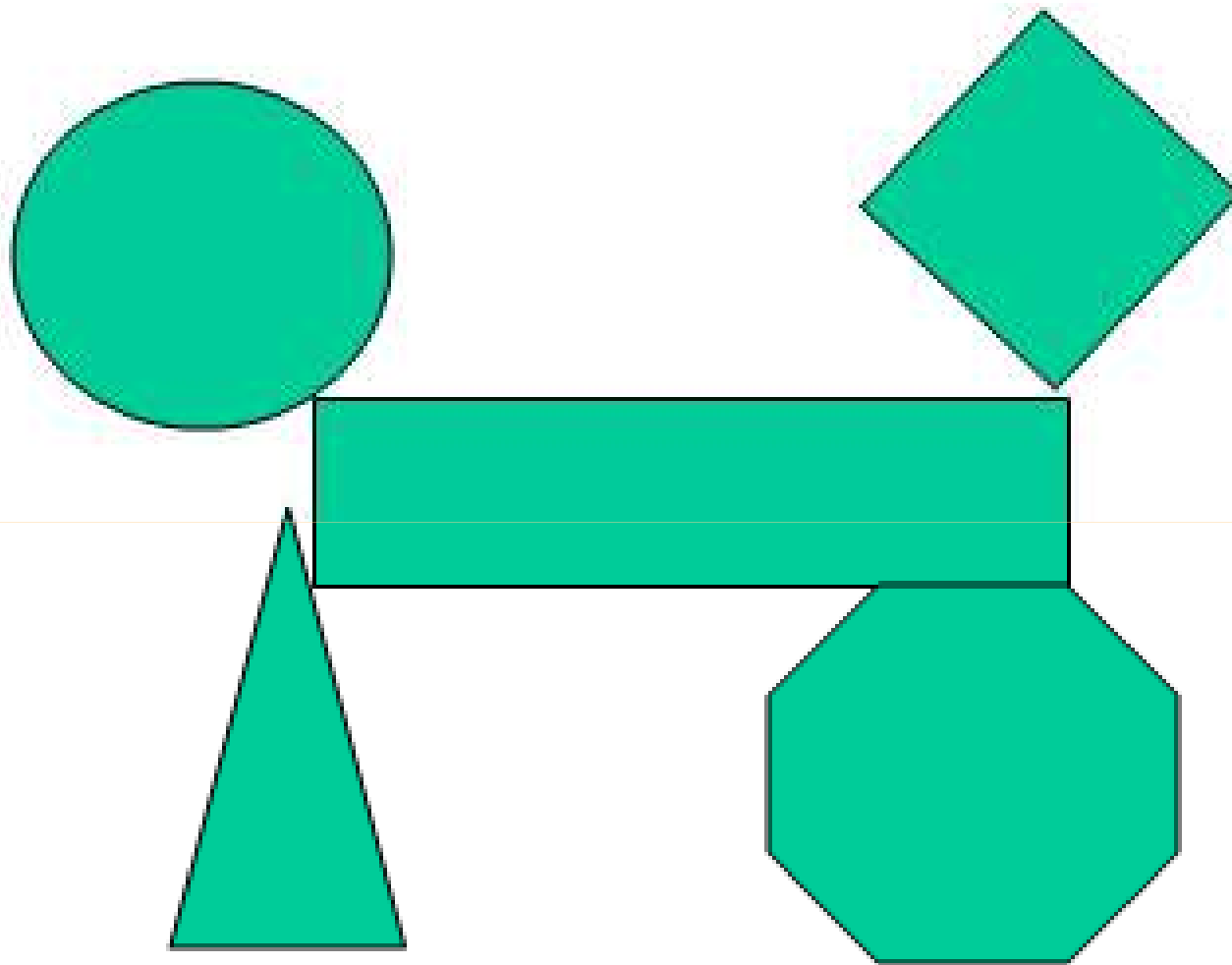
- Write things down if necessary
- Pay attention to the said and unsaid
- Stop talking & listen
- Communicate respect & understanding
- Try reminiscence and validation



Communication Killers

- “Don’t worry”
- “Don’t talk about it”





Reminiscence

