

Accessible Customer Service for Emergency Responders

An Emergency Management Ontario E-Learning Utility

Tips for Interacting with Seniors

Communication

- Try to listen carefully to what the person is saying, and give them plenty of encouragement.
- Allow the person to describe what help they need and how it can be provided to them.
- Refrain from shouting or speaking unnaturally slowly.
- Make sure you have their full attention before you speak.
- For those with dementia, as the dementia progresses, the person will become less able to start a conversation, so you may have to take the initiative.
- Humour can help to bring you closer together, and is a great pressure valve. Try to laugh together about misunderstanding and mistakes, when and if appropriate – it can help.
- Communicate your care and affection by the tone of your voice and the touch of your hand, if appropriate.

Behaviour

- Show respect.
- Be patient.
- Avoid being dismissive of the person's concerns or requests.