**Top tips for having a ‘what matters’ conversation: supporting someone with a dementia**

Here are some tips for having ‘what matters’ conversations with people with a learning disability:

1. **Prepare thoroughly**: try to understand the person’s background, diagnosis, and any specific needs. This will help you to tailor the conversation to their unique situation.
2. **Create a comfortable environment**: choose somewhere familiar, quiet, and relaxed setting for the conversation. Make sure the person feels safe and at ease.
3. **Be patient and allow time**: avoid rushing the conversation and give the person plenty of time to process information and respond.
4. **Use clear and simple language**: speak slowly and clearly, using simple sentences. Avoid jargon and difficult language.
5. **Ask open-ended questions**: focus on one topic at a time, and encourage the person to express themselves by asking questions that need more than a yes or no answer.
6. **Incorporate non-verbal communication**: pay attention to their body language, facial expressions, and gestures. You could use visual aids such as pictures, symbols, or ‘talking mats’ to facilitate understanding.
7. **Involve trusted individuals**: include carers, family members, or friends who know the person well and can give you extra context and support.
8. **Be empathetic and respectful**: show empathy and respect for the person’s feelings and experiences. Validate their emotions and listen actively.
9. **Focus on strengths and preferences**: highlight what the person can do and what they enjoy. Tailor the conversation to their interests and preferences.
10. **Document and share information**: record the conversation in a way that involves the person as much as possible. Share the information with those who need to know. Make sure it stays current and relevant.
11. **Be flexible and adaptable**: you may need change your way of working depending on the person’s responses and needs. Flexibility is key to effective communication.
12. **Follow up regularly**: regularly review and update the information you collect to make sure it reflects the person’s current needs and preferences.