Communicating with Someone Who Has a Psychiatric Illness

**PROCEED TO INTERACT AS YOU:**

BE CALM and GIVE FIRM, CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS; ASSESS THE SITUATION for safety; MAINTAIN ADEQUATE SPACE between you and the person; RESPOND TO APPARENT FEELINGS; RESPOND TO DELUSIONS AND HALLUCINATIONS by talking about the person's feeling rather than what he is saying; BE HELPFUL, ENCOURAGING and SUPPORTIVE.

**AVOID:**

WHISPERING, YELLING, RIDICULING, DECEIVING or TOUCHING, this may cause more fear and lead to violence.

**AS YOU:**

INTERACT TO PROCEED

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**So you need to...**

- Have trouble with reality: Be simple, truthful
- Be fearful: Stay Calm
- Be insecure: Be accepting
- Have trouble concentrating: Be brief, repeat
- Be over stimulated: Limit input
- Easily become agitated: Recognize agitation
- Have poor judgment: Not expect rational discussion
- Be preoccupied: Get attention first
- Be withdrawn: Initiate relevant conversation
- Have changing emotions: Disregard
- Have changing plans: Keep to one plan
- Have little empathy for you: Recognize as a symptom
- Believe delusions: Ignore, don't argue
- Have low self-esteem and motivation: Stay positive

218 West Lawrence, Springfield, Illinois 62704
217-522-1403 * 800-346-4572 * namiil@sbcglobal.net * http://il.nami.org

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