

First Link Connection Video Transcript - Part 3

When we consider the brain of a person living with dementia and how it handles reasoning, and in particular, opinion questions, we note that people have typically held their opinions for a long time and so these questions are helpful as they are more connected to long term memories where there are less boxes on the highway!

What people with this disease tell us is that once there was a diagnosis, people stopped asking their opinions. Why do we ask someone's opinion? We ask because we value what someone has to say. People with this disease need to feel valued.

If we consider a processing question or task such as the steps required to make a cup of coffee, people will often say there are around five steps. But there are actually around fifty steps. You need to go find the kitchen, know where the coffee is kept, how much coffee to put in, how many filters to use, etc. and so on.

The brain of a person without dementia goes through these steps so fast we don't even realize how many are involved.

Think of another activity of daily living. Each time the person with the disease must go through fifty steps.

Sometimes the person with the disease will get stuck on a step. And our instinct may be to jump in and do it for them. Don't take that task away from them. If the person with the disease gets stuck on a step, help them through that particular step. It doesn't necessarily mean they can't do the task.

However, if the disease has progressed to the point where the person living with dementia is struggling with all of the steps that go into activities of daily living like making a cup of coffee, or brushing teeth, we believe it isn't fair to ask them higher level reasoning questions or expect them to engage in complex tasks or questions such as downsizing their home or managing their investments. Care partners may therefore need to assist with the higher level questions and tasks before assisting with the activities of daily living to avoid the person living with dementia

feeling frustrated or inadequate.