

Communication Tips



As dementia progresses, it may become more difficult for your loved one to communicate and understand what others are communicating.

Your loved one may have difficulty:

- Finding the right word
- Understanding what words mean
- Sensitivity to touch or loud noises
- Staying on track while speaking
- Paying attention during longer conversations
- Difficulty blocking out background noise or other distractions

Early Stages:

- Do not assume a person's ability to communicate
- Be patient and reassuring - give the person time to respond
- Speak directly to the person - involve them in conversation
- It's okay to laugh! Humor lightens the mood and makes communication easier

Middle Stages:

- Avoid criticizing or correcting
- Do not overwhelm them with lengthy explanations
- Ask one question at a time
- Ask yes or no question, it's best to not offer too many choices
- Use visual or non-verbal cues

Late Stages:

- Approach from the front and identify yourself
- Encourage non-verbal communication like pointing
- Use touch, sights, sounds, smells, etc. as a way to communicate
- It's okay if you do not know what to say - your presence and friendship are what's important

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Video Resources for Dementia Caregivers

The videos below* are reenactments of challenging situations that caregivers of people with dementia may face. Get an idea of how to respond to your loved one in a particular moment.

“Through the Eyes of A Person with Dementia” – Milwaukee County Department on Aging

This video series helps people understand what common experiences might feel like through the perspective of the person with dementia.

- A Visit to the Doctor: www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBNq2HJjlk
- Caregiving at Home: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NnNcBldVC8
- First Responders: www.youtube.com/watch?v=h51Obxf-5QI
- Residential Care: www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-LLKhIqC7o
- Emergency Department: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEecUjOHRmM
- Mobile Crisis: www.youtube.com/watch?v=luMqhHtZ7zU

Caregiver Video Series – Office of Rural Health

To educate and aid caregivers, the Office of Rural Health funded the following caregiver video series, each of which are broken up into modules on specific topics. Topics include improving communication, intimacy and dementia, preventing financial mismanagement, minimizing inappropriate behaviors, and more.

· www.ruralhealth.va.gov/vets/resources.asp#dem

UCLA Alzheimer’s and Dementia Care Program

These videos will provide you with practical tools you can use in a variety of settings to create a safe, comfortable environment both for the person with dementia and the caregiver through roleplay of the “do’s” and “don’ts” in responding to your loved one with dementia.

· www.uclahealth.org/dementia/caregiver-education-videos

Online Training for Family Caregivers – Wisconsin Department of Health Services

This presentation discusses basic information about dementia and describes strategies for family caregivers to consider when providing care to someone who has changes in their behavior as a result of dementia. It also includes information on how to support family members who are providing care for a person with dementia, and how to take care of yourself as a family caregiver.

· www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/dementia/families.htm

Trualta-Online learning portal designed for families

With articles, videos, tip-sheets, and professional level training, there is something for everyone. Trualta helps family caregivers reduce stress, find local resources, and provide better care for their loved ones.

- www.Trualta.com/

**This is not an all-inclusive list of dementia caregiving videos available on the internet.*

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