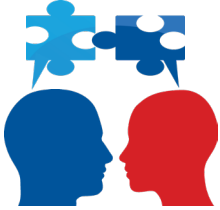


Communication Strategies for Caregivers of a Person with Dementia



What is dementia?

Dementia is a condition of the brain that makes it harder to remember and think. With dementia, a person's intellect, memory, personality and ability to communicate worsens over time. The most common type is Alzheimer's disease.

Getting the Message IN

You can change the way you communicate to make sure the person with dementia understands you.



- Use **gentle touch** to gain attention.
- Speak **face-to-face**.
- Speak **slowly**. **Pause** often.
- Use **intonation** in your voice. Intonation is the way your voice rises and falls as you speak.
- **Repeat** what you are saying.
- **Rephrase/restate** the information.
Say: "I'm going on vacation. I'm taking a trip."
- **Be specific**. Use proper names instead of he, she, they.
Say: "Mike" Say: "Toothbrush"
Instead of: "He" Instead of: "it"
- **Break down instructions** into smaller steps.
- Support your speech with exaggerated **facial expressions** and **body language**.
- **Reduce distractions** in the room. For example, turn the television off.

Getting the Message OUT

You can help a person with dementia express their thoughts to you.



- **Ask** the person with dementia **yes or no questions**.
- **Ask closed-ended questions**. The person answering this type of question can respond with one word or with a short, specific piece of information.
Ask: "Shall we go to the grocery store or to the mall?"
Instead of: "Where shall we go?"
- **Provide choices** when asking questions.
Ask: "Do you mean Bob or David?"
Instead of: "Who are you talking about?"
- Encourage the person with dementia to **use props, objects, or pictures**.
- **Do not criticize or correct** incorrect statements. This can agitate the person with dementia.
- If the person with dementia is getting frustrated, **gently change the subject**.