

Tips for Communicating with Someone with Alzheimer's Disease



How to Communicate with Someone Who Has Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease changes a person's memory, behavior and cognitive abilities. As it progresses, it impacts their communication skills, and their caregiver needs to understand how to use a different approach. The communication differences caused by Alzheimer's evolve as the disease develops. We will explain how Alzheimer's impacts communication and how to talk to someone who has it.

How Does Alzheimer's Disease Change Communication Needs?

As someone progresses through Alzheimer's, these communication problems can arise:

- Losing their train of thought
- Relying more on nonverbal communication
- Forgetting specific words and phrases
- Becoming sensitive to touch, tone of voice and loudness
- Getting frustrated when they can't communicate their message

If you know someone with Alzheimer's, you can improve your communication with them by understanding the challenges they face. The following tips will help you connect with them through every stage.

1. Talking with Someone in the Early Stages of Alzheimer's

A person in the early stages of Alzheimer's still has many of the communication abilities as someone without the disease. They may begin to experience some difficulty because of Alzheimer's onset. When someone you know has mild Alzheimer's disease, let them determine how you help. Ask them what methods of communication feel the most comfortable. If they have trouble expressing something, let them figure it out unless they request assistance. Remember to treat them with respect, dignity and autonomy.

2. How to Talk to Someone with Alzheimer's in the Middle Stages

In the middle stages of Alzheimer's, the person's symptoms begin to interfere with daily life. They can become overwhelmed when they receive a large amount of information at once. Try asking yes or no questions instead of open-ended ones to minimize the choices they need to make. Stay patient as they find the words to say to you.

Compared to the early stage, they may begin to ask for more assistance with communication. A person with moderate Alzheimer's speaks best in one-on-one conversations with few distractions.

3. Late-Stage Alzheimer's Communication Techniques

During the late stages of Alzheimer's, the person has an increased need for simplified communication. They may begin to count on nonverbal communication as their primary method. If they get confused by verbal cues, try using nonverbal techniques such as pointing. You can also encourage them to use nonverbal methods when speaking gets difficult.

Treating your loved one with respect becomes critical for someone with severe Alzheimer's. Speak to them in a normal tone of voice instead of using "baby talk." Include them in conversation and acknowledge their presence.

Alzheimer's and Dementia Services Through Active Home Care

Everyone who has a form of dementia like Alzheimer's has unique care needs. If your loved one has dementia, our network of trained caregivers can provide individualized help. We refer you to care professionals who come to their home to offer personalized care that lets them remain independent. Before we connect you with a caregiver, you can interview them about their qualifications and put your mind at ease.

For more information, call us at 786-360-3449.