



Communicating with someone who has dementia: 12 helpful hints



Dementia is an illness of the brain. Communication can often be difficult as the person may be confused about where they are, what day it is and whom people are.

1. Be calm and patient.
2. Face the person, speak clearly and slowly.
3. Ensure you have their attention - gently touch their arm and say their name.
4. Use short, simple sentences - say exactly what you mean.
5. Try to get one idea across at a time.
6. Allow plenty of time for the person to take in what you say and to reply.
7. Try not to confuse or embarrass the person by correcting them bluntly.
8. Use questions which ask for a simple answer.
9. Don't ask questions which test their memory, eg 'what did you do yesterday?'
10. Talk about familiar people, places and ideas.
11. Use the names of the people you are talking about.
12. **Actions speak louder than words!**
A smile, touch or gesture can be just as important in making yourself understood and showing that you care. Sometimes holding the person's hand when you talk can be very reassuring.

Alzheimer Scotland website: www.alzscot.org and 24 hour Helpline 0808 808 3000 (free)
NHS website: www.nhs.uk/Pathways/dementia

You can ask your GP or call your local council to find out about support services available.

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