



Family  
Caregiver  
Alliance®

# 5

## Tips to Communicate with Someone with Dementia

**We may not know how** to communicate with a person with dementia — but we can learn. Here are five tips to reduce stress and enhance communication.



### **State your message clearly.**

Use simple words and sentences. Speak slowly, distinctly, and in a reassuring tone. Use names of people and places instead of pronouns or abbreviations.

### **Ask simple, answerable questions.**

Ask one question at a time; yes or no answers work best. Refrain from asking open-ended questions or giving too many choices.

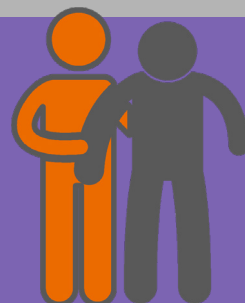


### **Break down activities into steps.**

Encourage the person to do what they can, gently remind them of steps they forget, and assist with steps they're no longer able to accomplish on their own.

### **When the going gets tough, redirect.**

Connect with the person on a feeling level before you redirect. You might say, "I see you're feeling sad — I'm sorry you're upset. Let's go for a walk."



### **Remember the good old days.**

People with dementia might not remember what happened 45 minutes ago, but they may recall their lives 45 years earlier. Invite them to reminisce!

**Want to Learn More?** Find more tips for positive interactions in our **Communication for Dementia** fact sheet at [caregiver.org/resource/communication-dementia](https://caregiver.org/resource/communication-dementia).

