

Tips for Changes in Communication and Behavior for People With Dementia

Communication can be hard for people with Alzheimer's and related dementias because they have trouble remembering things. They also can become agitated and anxious, even angry. In some forms of dementia, language abilities are affected such that people have trouble finding the right words or have difficulty speaking. You may feel frustrated or impatient, but it is important to understand that the disease is causing the change in communication skills. To help make communication easier, you can:

- Reassure the person. Speak calmly. Listen to his or her concerns and frustrations. Try to show that you understand if the person is angry or fearful.
- Allow the person to keep as much control in his or her life as possible.
- Respect the person's personal space.
- Build quiet times into the day, along with activities.

- Keep well-loved objects and photographs around the house to help the person feel more secure.
- Remind the person who you are if he or she doesn't remember, but try not to say, "Don't you remember?"
- Encourage a two-way conversation for as long as possible.
- Try distracting the person with an activity, such as a familiar book or photo album, if you are having trouble communicating with words.