

Let's talk

Good communication
tips for talking with
people with dementia.



This resource has been developed by the Dementia Australia Advisory Committee (DAAC). The national representative group made up of people living with dementia.

Here are some ways people with dementia say good communication would improve their lives.

“

Treat me with respect and understanding ”

Talk with me

- Please talk with me, not my carer, family member or friend.
- Don't prejudge my level of understanding.

Make sure you have my attention

- Make a connection with me.
- Make eye contact.
- Use my name so I know you're talking to me.
- Make sure I am listening.

Speak clearly

- Use short sentences, with one idea at a time.
- Avoid using slang words, as I might misunderstand.
- Use simple questions and/or repetition, offered with sensitivity.
- It's easier for me to answer direct questions which contain information. Instead of asking, 'Wasn't it lovely yesterday?', ask, 'Wasn't it lovely when we went out to the park yesterday?'.

Treat me with respect and understanding

- I am still a person, so don't treat me differently to anyone else.
- Respect and empathy are important to everyone, including people with dementia.
- If I act differently it may be because I am having difficulty communicating or because of my dementia.

Don't question my diagnosis

- Everyone experiences dementia differently, and the symptoms of dementia are not always obvious.
- Listen to me and consider my feelings.

Distractions cause confusion

- Less noise and fewer distractions, such as bright lights, will help me to focus.
- Be patient and understanding.
- Sometimes it takes a little longer for me to process information and find the right answer.
- Don't rush me. Give me more time to respond. Give me time to ask questions.

Signage

- Please use clear and simple signs.

What is dementia?

Dementia describes a collection of symptoms that are caused by disorders affecting the brain. It is not one specific disease. You can have one or more types of dementia. Dementia affects thinking, behaviour and the ability to perform everyday tasks and in time will interfere with the person's normal, social and working life.

Everyone with dementia is unique. There are many different types of dementia and symptoms can present differently in different people.

Dementia in Australia

Every three seconds, someone in the world develops dementia. There are currently more than 400 thousand¹ people in Australia who have dementia and many of these people are living and actively participating in their community. It's one of the most common yet misunderstood conditions in the country.

¹ as at February 2023

Everyday acts of support and understanding can make a big difference in the lives of people living with dementia. There are some simple steps you can take to make your local community, business or organisation more dementia-friendly.

To learn what you can do to contribute to a dementia-friendly nation, please visit **dementiafriendly.org.au**

If you have questions or would like more information, please get in touch with us.

National Dementia Helpline

1800 100 500

For language assistance, please call **131 450**

dementia.org.au

For further information about communication, read Dementia Australia's help sheet on 'Caring for someone with dementia' at **dementia.org.au/help-sheets**

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Find us online
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