

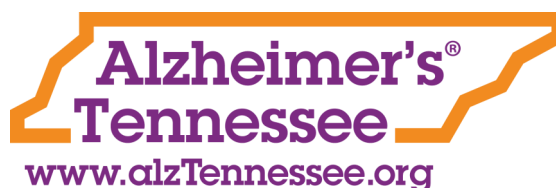
## Tips for Enhancing Interactions

- Speak in a calm and reassuring tone.
- Talk slowly and distinctly.
- Use simple words.
- Approach the individual from the front to avoid startling them.
- Address the person by name.
- Maintain eye contact while speaking.
- Use positive reinforcements, such as smiles and a gentle touch.
- Allow an adequate period for a response when engaging in conversation.
- Ask only one question at a time.
- Eliminate distractions.
- Avoid negative-sounding statements. Instead of "Don't go outside," say, "Let's stay inside."
- Use humor whenever possible, though not at the individual's expense.
- Use non-verbal gestures for cueing, such as demonstrating hand washing.



## You Are Not Alone

- Family Counseling & Care-Planning
- Education & Resource Referrals
- Caregiver Training
- First Responder Education
- FREE Helpline
- Support Groups
- Advocacy
- Research



### Alzheimer's Tennessee Mission:

**To serve those facing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, to promote brain health through education, and to champion global prevention and treatment efforts.**

**Alzheimer's Tennessee, Inc. is the only independent 501(c)3 not for profit organization that has been in Tennessee for families facing Alzheimer's since 1983.**

**100% of funds raised benefit Tennesseans.**

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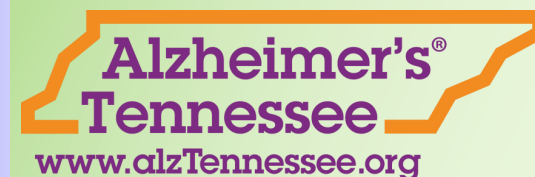
**www.alzTennessee.org • Toll Free 888.326.9888**

# COMMUNICATION

## Tips For Caregivers



Communication is important at any age and at any stage of Alzheimer's disease. People can benefit from loving gestures and touch long after they lose their ability to communicate with words.



**Alzheimer's: A Journey  
No One Should Take Alone**

# ≡ Communication Tips for Caregivers

## Communication in Early Stage Alzheimer's or Dementia

- Be sensitive.
- Treat the individual as an adult.
- Do not downplay the disease.
- If the person denies your explanation, accept his or her reaction and avoid further details at that moment.
- Consider disclosing the diagnosis in the presence of other family members, a social worker or another professional.
- Prepare simple answers to the person's questions.
- Offer reassurance and express your desire to provide ongoing support.
- Allow the person to express his or her feelings. Avoid telling them they shouldn't feel that way.
- Encourage the individual to speak to a healthcare professional about concerns.
- When the time is right, provide follow-up information, such as an explanation of symptoms.



## Communication in Middle Stage Alzheimer's or Dementia

- Be aware of non-verbal communication as language is lost.
- Treat the individual as an adult.
- Allow the person to express his or her feelings. Avoid telling them they shouldn't feel that way.
- As a result of the inability to process verbal information, the individual with dementia may feel confused, anxious, irritable, or depressed. It is important to involve them in discussions, even if you will make the final decision.

"Learning to seek and accept help is the number one job for caretakers. We can search out materials and people that can help us, and we can be enriched by friends, family and even strangers who will walk with us on this journey"

Terri Jo Barron, Esq.  
caregiver and widow  
of Senator Dempsey Barron

## Communication in Late Stage Alzheimer's or Dementia

- Use favorite music from the era of the person with dementia.
- Read or sing to them.
- Reminisce. Surprisingly, old memories sometimes remain even after recent memories fade.
- Touch continues to be important. A loving voice and gentle touch are often soothing.
- Smile.
- Avoid loud noises and fast movement.

