

Memory Assessment and Management Service

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear **NHS Foundation Trust**



Tips on supporting your memory

This leaflet aims to provide quick advice on what you can do to with regards to common problems people with a memory problem commonly develop.

Memory problems



What might help

- 1. Have a routine
- 2. Keep items in the same place, e.g. keys, glasses
- 3. Take notes, e.g. use shopping lists
- 4. Use memory aids diaries, post-it notes, calendars, notice boards
- 5. Repeat information
- 6. Use prompts and cues

Difficulties with reading and writing



What might help

- 1. Ask family to read things out.
- 2. Offer help to write e.g. cards.

Difficulties finding words or understanding speech



What might help

- 1. Give yourself extra time to respond
- 2. Use non-verbal communication: gestures, pointing, showing
- 3. Make use of pictures
- 4. For family try to talk slowly and clearly!
- 5. Rephrase questions, make them simpler
- 6. Try not to answer for the person

Difficulties recognising objects, colours etc



What might help

- 1. Good organisation keep things in the same place if possible
- 2. Good contrast and lighting; make sure things you need stand out eg dark crockery on a white tablecloth
- Use other senses and find non-visual activities eg describe things to the person, singing and dancing are good activities
- For family give the person more time to see and adjust

Difficulties dressing, judging distances, recognising people



What might help

- 1. Get help with sequencing tasks (do things step by step, e.g. dressing)
- 2. Focus on the steps involved in a task and not on the end result
- 3. For family give the person more time, use gentle guiding, give reminders

Difficulties with problem solving and distractibility



What might help

- 1. Do one task at a time
- 2. Break down tasks step by step, allow more time
- 3. Reduce distractions to help focus attention eg remove background noise eg TV, radio or other conversations
- 4. Help the person to get started by providing prompts and setting things out eg put items required for preparing a meal out in order
- 5. You can use written instructions

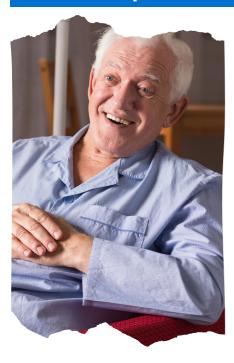
Difficulties controlling emotions or behaviour



What might help

- 1. Family to remember that this might be related to the dementia and not done on purpose.
- 2. Someone may be feeling sad or frustrated because of their memory problems and it may help to talk about this.
- 3. If a task is getting you all worked up (you or your carer), have a break if possible, and return to it later when feeling calmer. This is more likely to be successful.

General tips



If you have a memory illness, make sure you...

- Keep doing things you enjoy;
- Socialise, have fun and are active!
- Look after your health and your diet;
- Try not to get embarrassed if you forget something;
- Talk to others if you notice that you are becoming low in mood or anxious:
- Do one thing at a time and break tasks down;
- Take your time there is no need to hurry;
- Don't be too hard on yourself;
- Focus on enjoyment and participation rather than achievement;
- Identify which time of day is best for you.



For family and friends, make sure you...

- Also keep doing activities you enjoy you need to look after yourself;
- Find ways to support the memory problems, but do not take over;
- You can help your loved one by starting an activity;
- You could help by demonstrating and supporting through difficult parts;
- Take a team approach and do tasks together;
- Maybe join a carers group it can be good to get more support.



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