



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
3. Use other senses and find non-visual activities eg describe things to the person, singing and dancing are good activities
4. 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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