

Communication and Behavior

Alzheimer's disease makes it harder for your loved one to understand and be understood. It can also cause your loved one to act in ways that frustrate or upset you. Keep in mind that these problems are due to the disease and are not done on purpose. Learn ways to cope with challenging situations and avoid making them worse.

Strategies for Improving Communication

People with Alzheimer's have trouble understanding the meaning of what is said. However, they are very sensitive to *how* things are said. An agitated tone can upset your loved one. A calm tone can reassure. Keep a positive tone in your voice as much as you can. These other tips may also help you communicate better.



Avoid Arguing About Reality

Your loved one will become confused about reality and not be able to separate past from present. He or she may even forget who you are. This can be upsetting. But don't insist on your version of reality—it may just cause more confusion and stress. Decide how important each issue is. If you can “play along,” you may spare both of you much frustration.

Instead of saying, *“You can't call your dad. He's been dead for years!”*

Try saying, *“I'm sure he's not home right now. Let's call him later.”*

Reassure

Your loved one may ask the same question over and over again. This can be annoying, but try to understand why the question is being asked. For instance, your loved one may be worried about missing an appointment or being left behind.

Instead of saying, *“I just told you! Your appointment is at 2 o'clock!”*

Try saying, *“Don't worry, I'm going, too. I won't leave without you.”*