



## Caregiving Basics

### Compassionate Communication

A workshop presented by  
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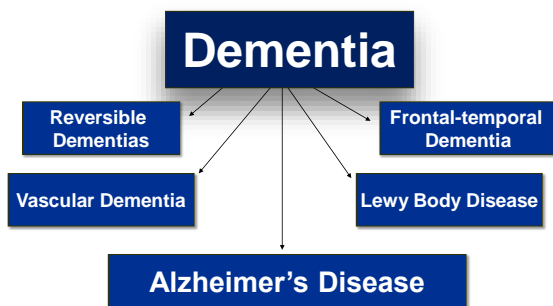
## What is Dementia?

A syndrome that describes a group of symptoms which can be reversible or progressive

Dementia itself is not a disease or a specific diagnosis

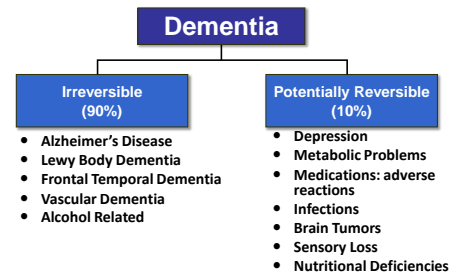
Dementia is not a part of the normal aging process

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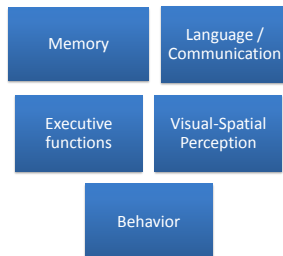
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## Irreversible vs. Reversible Dementia



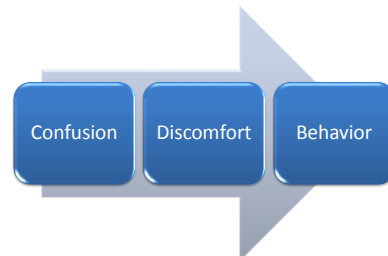
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## What changes?

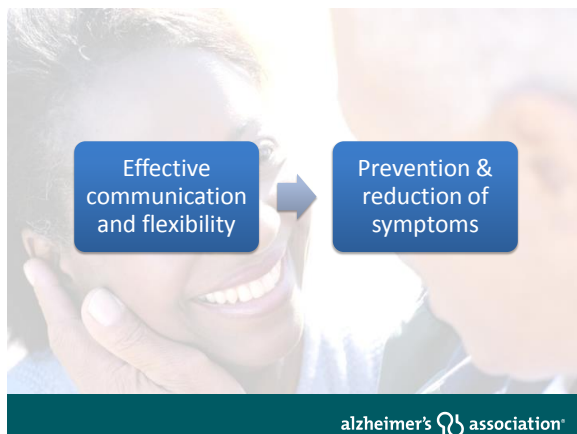


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## Alzheimer's Disease: A Disease of Emotions



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## Principles for Understanding and Communicating

Understand what isn't possible to change

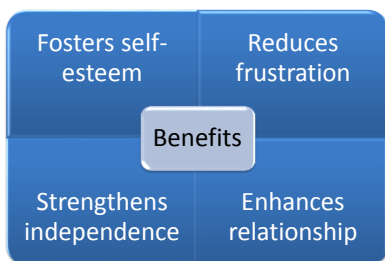
Thoughts, beliefs and actions significantly impact behavior

All behavior has meaning

Connecting overrides the task

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## Benefits of Compassionate Communication



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## 1. Be a Good Listener

Express interest

Don't interrupt

Focus on feelings

Be patient

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## 2. Facilitate a Connection

Establish eye contact

Use touch and gestures

Use a calm voice

Speak simply and slowly

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## 3. Check the Environment

Be in plain view

Avoid bright and dark settings

Set aside a quiet place

Reduce distractions

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## 4. Adjust Your Approach

Think ahead	
Give simple instructions	
Ask one question at a time	
Be mindful of facial expressions and body language	

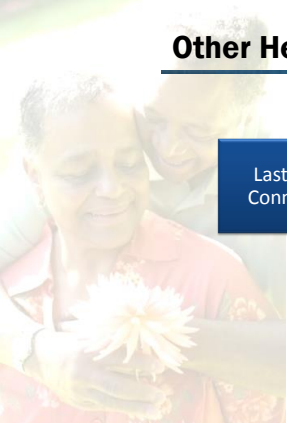
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## 5. Focus on Remaining Skills

Match activities to abilities	
Give praise and offer compliments	
Encourage activities of independence	
Respond to feelings, not words	
Establish routines	

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## Other Helpful Suggestions



Last Word Connection

Other Communication Forms

Humor

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## Effective Communication

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat</li> <li>• Accept blame</li> <li>• Leave room</li> <li>• Agree</li> <li>• Use distraction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasoning</li> <li>• Argue/Confront</li> <li>• Reminding</li> <li>• Questioning recent memory</li> <li>• Take it personally</li> </ul>

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## Example 1

### AVOID REASONING

*"What doctor's appointment? There's nothing wrong with me."*

**DON'T:** *"You've been seeing the doctor every 3 months. It's written in the calendar and I told you yesterday."*

**DO:** (short explanation) *"It's just a regular check up."*  
(accept blame) *"I'm sorry if I forgot to tell you."*

## Example 2

### AVOID REMINDING THEM THEY FORGOT

*"Joe hasn't called for a long time. I hope he's okay."*

**DON'T:** *"Joe called yesterday and you talked to him for 15 minutes."*

**DO:** (reassure/distract) *"You really like talking to Joe, don't you? Let's call him when we get back from our walk."*

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## Example 3

### AVOID TAKING IT PERSONALLY

*"Who are you? Where's my husband?"*

**DON'T:** *"What do you mean – who's your husband? I am."*

**DO:** (go with the flow, reassure) *"He'll be home for dinner."* (distract) *"How about some milk and cookies?"*

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## Understanding Why Difficult Behavior Occurs

### Be a detective

If **sudden** behavioral Problems develop, check for physical ailments first:

- Are they thirsty / hungry?
- Do they have to go to the bathroom?
- Too hot or too cold?
- Not feeling well? In pain?
- Overmedicated?
- Overwhelmed?



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## Your Chapter's Services

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the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

- Care Consultation
- Information and Referral
- Support Groups
- Education
- Safety Services

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