



Valuing and respecting the person

hints & tips

Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain. The word dementia describes a set of symptoms that can include memory loss, difficulties with thinking, perception, communicating and doing everyday tasks. These symptoms will gradually get worse as the disease progresses. No two people experience dementia in the same way – it affects everyone differently.

Nearly 70 per cent of people with dementia said that the main reason they stop going out is a lack of confidence. Your encouragement and support will help people living with dementia to remain part of the community, be more active in the local area and live more enjoyable, fulfilled lives. Here are some simple tips that may help you.

tip1 Speak clearly

Speak clearly, calmly and slowly to allow the person time to understand. Use simple short sentences and avoid direct questions. Keep choices to a minimum and don't raise your voice.

Where possible talk in a noise-free, non-distracting place or find a quiet corner. If the person finds it difficult to find a word, then you could suggest one... but be careful not to interrupt or finish the sentence for them!

tip2 Body language

People with dementia may find it difficult to understand what is being said but can be quick to interpret messages on people's faces and may still be aware of body language. Smile warmly, make eye contact, stay at the person's level, use a friendly tone and respect personal space.

tip3 Listen

Listen carefully to what the person has to say, giving plenty of encouragement, whilst looking out for other clues of what they might be trying to communicate.

tip4 Show respect & patience

Adapt what you are saying if the person with dementia does not understand it. Allow them time to find the words to tell you what they want. Don't rush them and try to go at their pace.

tip5 Keep the noise down

A person with dementia may have difficulty listening if there are a lot of different noises around them. Reduce unnecessary noise or move to a quieter area.

tip6 Environment & lighting

People with dementia may not recognise colours, faces or objects. They may have problems with spatial awareness. What is obvious to you may not be obvious to them. Be aware that features such as lighting, mirrors, shadows, steps and patterned walls and floors may cause problems for some.

tip7 Help with handling money

Counting money, calculating and handling change, recognising coins and banknotes and knowing the value of money can all be difficult for someone with dementia. You could offer to help by counting out money and giving a receipt.

tip8 Finding the way

People with dementia may have forgotten where things are or they may not recognise everyday objects. They may need you to help them to find their way around. They may not be able to follow simple directions and need you to guide them to where they want to go.

tip9 Feeling lost

Sometimes people with dementia may feel lost in familiar places or forget where they live. If someone is lost and distressed offer to help by asking if their address is on something they might have in their pocket or bag. If necessary, the police can help.

tip10 Difficulty finding things

People with dementia may have forgotten what they came into the shop for or they may have a list, but have problems finding the things they want. Offer to help with finding things on the list if they have one. Help them to choose the right amount of things, particularly if they seem to be buying an unusually large amount of something.

tip11 Making choices

While choice is good, for someone with dementia too much choice can be confusing. Ask what the person would like and then suggest two or three likely options. Offer one choice at a time, preferably with a visual prompt.

tip12 Whose reality?

The person may be confused and say something that doesn't make sense. Avoid making the person feel embarrassed or foolish by contradicting them. Try to find a way around the situation.

tip13 Being predictable

The person with dementia may be confused if things have been rearranged or by new people they meet. Try to keep things the same or offer additional assistance if things have changed. Try to arrange that the same person supports the person each time they visit but remember they might not remember you or what you talked about the last time you met.

tip14 Every day can be different

For some people with dementia what they can do changes from day to day so how you help them may need be different every time they visit. Look out for signs and offer help when needed.

tip15 Feelings matter most

People with dementia may not remember facts or people, but they will remember how a person or a situation made them feel. Always try to make someone with dementia feel valued and respected.

**dementia
matters**
in Powys

01874 611723 info@dementiamatterspowys.org.uk
www.dementiafriendlybrecon.org.uk

MORE INFORMATION

www.dementiafriends.org.uk www.alzheimers.org.uk
National Dementia Helpline: **0300 222 1122**