

DEMENTIA & ALZHEIMER'S

Tip Guide

Understanding dementia and how to adapt your approach for the best outcomes.

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This tip guide is brought to you by

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The Arbor Company is operated by The Arbor Company, a senior living provider with a rich background of working with seniors with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia.

We developed this guide in hopes that it will help prepare you to better serve those with memory loss.

We're here to help. For reprints of this guide or more information about our hands-on dementia training programs, call The Arbor Company at 404-237-4026.

For additional resources, visit:
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You may encounter someone who...



Appears Elusive, Resistive or Leaves the Scene

Due to **lack of attention span** and memory, people with dementia may exhibit these behaviors:

- Deny that they called 911 or asked for help
- Wander away from the scene of an accident or unsafe situation
- Leave the scene of an accident
- Not understand the severity of their actions
- Deny that they were involved in an accident or other illegal situation
- Unable to process what you are saying or doing

It's **more** than forgetfulness.

Dementia and Alzheimer's disease are the loss of mental processing of such severity that it interferes with a person's ability to function. **Dementia and Alzheimer's disease can:**

- Affect the way the brain processes
 - impulse control
 - sequencing
 - attention
 - memory
 - problem solving
- Take away the ability to use and process common language
- Affect vision creating binocular or monocular like vision
- Alter the ability to use fine motor skills affecting mobility and hand manipulation
- Affect the way sensory information is processed causing hyper and hypo sensitivities

An estimated 5.3 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease. By 2050, that number is expected to triple to 13.8 million. **Only 45% of people with Alzheimer's or their caregivers report being told of the diagnosis.**

Dementia is progressive; it only gets worse!

EARLY: Functions like a 10-12 year old

- Often paranoid or suspicious of others
- Respects authority, but may not register you as an authority figure
- Has no filter and can be offensive or rude to others
- May not be able to process or follow general traffic or safety awareness signs

MIDDLE: Functions like a 4-7 year old

- Often gets lost in their life causing wandering or traveling back in time
- May have a hard time communicating or understanding what you're saying
- Gets frustrated easily and may act out physically
- May not be aware of socially appropriate behavior

LATE: Functions like a 3 year old to infant

- Has limited safety awareness
- Losing all mobility
- Losing all language skills
- Slow to process information

Note that these ages are simply a tool to help you understand the progression of dementia. Still, remember that it is best to treat these individuals as adults.

someone who...



Appears Belligerent

Due to **lack of impulse control**, impaired problem solving and limited awareness people with dementia may exhibit these behaviors:

- Excessive yelling
- Use of profanity
- Physically acting out
- Inappropriate social behaviors
- Indecent exposure
- Inappropriate sexual conduct
- Hallucinations
- Frantically searching for items or people
- Telling unrealistic stories/accounts of events
- Unable to process what you are saying or doing

You may encounter



Appears Intoxicated

Due to **impaired judgment**, reasoning, mobility and speech, people with dementia may exhibit these behaviors:

- Ignoring stop signs or traffic signals
- Erratic driving patterns
- Speeding or driving very slow
- Driving wrong way on a one-way
- Slurred speech
- Unsteady gait
- Appear unkempt
- Unable to process what you are saying or doing

Your approach is vital. For the best results, adapt...

...what they see:

- Approach from the front and as slowly as you can
- Offer your hand as a sign of friendship
- Get to the side and eye level

...what they hear:

- Remove distractions – sirens, radios, TV and other people
- Introduce yourself and use their preferred name
- Use fewer words and more visuals
- Offer limited choices – this or that?
- Talk to me! Get connected and let me know what you're doing. Don't get louder.

...what they feel:

- Wait 10-15 seconds for a response
- Use hand-under-hand to provide comfort
- Use pressure points to lessen sensitivity when administering medical attention – knee, shoulder, elbow
- Don't restrain if not absolutely necessary

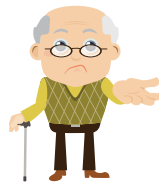
You may encounter someone who...



Appears Fearful or Victimized

Due to **impaired reasoning and judgment**, people with dementia may exhibit the following behaviors:

- Be afraid of you
- Be afraid of life-long family and friends
- Accuse others of false actions
- Report false abuse, burglary or stealing
- Repeatedly call 911



Appears to Misremember

Due to **impaired memory**, people with dementia may exhibit the following behaviors:

- Leave a store without paying
- Pump gas without paying
- Take items from other people that they think are theirs
- Confuse the past with the present
- Appear to be telling lies or making up information
- Appear to have an inconsistent or conflicting account of events