

Dementia Cue Card

What to Look For:

- **Poor impulse control** – does private things in public and is easily irritated, may unexpectedly reach for, or touch, others or objects
- **Poor immediate recall of info** – forgets what you said, repeatedly asks or shares without recalling having done so, believes you are lying
- **Loss of short term memory** – doesn't remember last contact with you and doesn't follow through, unable to give accurate info
- **Word finding problems** – is vague, uses the wrong words, gets off-target
- **Confabulation** – makes up info – unaware of inconsistencies, argues
- **Poor judgment** – choices don't make sense or are inconsistent with past values
 - dressed inappropriately for the situation
 - tries to get away or resist, even though surrounded or outnumbered
 - refuses help even though needing it
- **Gets lost in place and time** – driving or walking – goes back in time
- **Retained social skills** – covers for mistakes and *agrees* without understanding
- **Emotional distress** – fearful, angry, or happy – inappropriate for situation

How To Check It Out:

- Ask questions that require explanations (not just “yes” or “no”)
- Listen for errors, vague, or off-target comments, slowed or impaired understanding of what was said, repeats, extreme emotional reactions, or distractibility...BUT
- DO NOT point out or highlight *inappropriate* behaviors or argue reality
- Seek out additional info from significant others – in a separate space
- Notice increase or decrease in frequency, intensity, or volume of speech
- Notice changes in visual, verbal, or physical reactions or abilities

Some Important Facts:

- As many as 50% of those over 85 will have some form or degree of dementia
- Dementia is progressive – symptoms and abilities change over time
- 5-10% of people 70 and younger have dementia
- Dementia has many forms – different symptoms and progression patterns
- Behavior or word finding changes, *not* memory changes, may be the first signs
- Dementia is inconsistent – good/bad days, times, and moments
- Alzheimers, Lewy Body, Frontal-Temporal, and Vascular are common forms
- Leaving an area and getting lost or disoriented can easily happen
- Becoming distressed with confinement or confrontation can quickly happen
- Visual field awareness is limited in most dementias and object recognition varies

Dementia Assist Card

How to HELP!

Use PPA – Positive Physical Approach™

- Stop 6 feet out front – public space
- Look friendly and make *Hi!* sign with hand
- Offer hand, making eye contact
- Approach from the front – moving slowly
- Initiate the greeting and introduce yourself
- Keep shoulders and face back – respect intimate space
- Use a supportive stance – (stand to the right-hand – not in front)
- Get to their eye level (central vision) staying at arm's length
- **Wait** for their response before continuing...
- Make positive statements
 - “Let’s try...”
 - “Do this...” (show what you want the person to do with your body)
 - “Could you please help me...”



What to Say!

- Keep your voice calm, low, and rhythmic
- Keep it short and simple
- Give simple choices – “this or that” or “this or something else”
- Use objects – show them – don’t just say it!
- Break task/movement down – one step at a time
- Ask the person to try or to help you
- Use empathetic statements
 - “Sounds like you are... (give emotion)”
 - “Looks like you might... (give condition)”
 - “I’m sorry that happened, that’s not OK”
 - “This is hard, I hate it for you”



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www.TeepaSnow.com

Created by Teepa Snow, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA

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