



VISITING A LOVED ONE WITH DEMENTIA: CONVERSATION TIPS

A dementia diagnosis changes many things, including how you connect and converse with your loved one. Meaningful conversations are still possible—they just look a little different. Remember: the goal is connection, not correctness. Try these tips on your next visit:

MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE

Keep it simple. Ask about the near-term in ways that don't require factual recall: "How was your morning?" or "What's the best part of your day so far?" Even if specific details are hard to remember, focusing on the experience and the emotions behind it is a step in the right direction.

REMINISCE FONDLY

Many people with dementia recall memories from years past. Revisit a well-loved one as if it happened yesterday. Instead of "Do you remember the Grand Canyon trip?" try "That trip to the Grand Canyon was fabulous"—then let them lead.

SHARE UPDATES ABOUT YOURSELF

Talking about your own life offers a low-pressure way to stay connected. Simple mentions like "I'm planning a trip soon" or "I just read a fantastic book" keep conversation flowing without putting anyone on the spot.

DON'T CORRECT OR CHALLENGE

If your loved one gets confused or remembers something differently, resist the urge to correct every detail. Prioritizing reassurance over accuracy keeps conversations calmer and warmer for everyone.

CONNECT WITHOUT WORDS

Tone and body language matter as much as what you say. Make eye contact, smile, speak calmly, sit beside them, and let silences be. These cues often communicate more than words.

GIVE THEM TIME

Processing can take longer with dementia, so ask one question at a time and pause after speaking. Resist the urge to fill every silence or finish their sentences. A little patience gives your loved one room to respond and feel heard.

Remember: Connection matters more than a perfect conversation.

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