

# ASSISTING PERSONS WITH DEMENTIA: TIPS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

When communicating with persons with memory loss, remember, their reactions are normal based on what they believe is happening. Memory loss requires first responders to adopt a new way of talking.

When assisting a person with memory loss or other cognitive changes, keep these communication tips in mind:



## Approaching

### **DO:** Approach slowly & calmly

- Approach from the front and introduce yourself clearly
- Give them time to comprehend what you are asking/saying
- Be patient, cheerful and reassuring

### **DON'T:** Approach loudly or from behind

- Don't rush them
- Don't raise your voice
- Don't approach in a way that will startle someone with reduced peripheral vision

## Reasoning

### **DO:** Be patient & go with the flow

- Provide brief explanations
- Acknowledge their feelings
- Present them with easy, straightforward options to choose from
- Forgive any negative reactions

### **DON'T:** Argue

- Don't contradict or correct
- Don't reason
- Don't try to convince them
- Don't insist

## Reminding

### **DO:** Reassure & distract

- Repeat instructions or sentences in exactly the same way (don't re-word)
- If they are insistent or in distress, try to calmly validate their feelings and offer a distraction

### **DON'T:** Constantly remind them

- Don't remind them that they forgot
- Don't question or test their memory
- Don't take things personally
- Don't blame them

## **Next Steps:**

**Free Training Videos:** Check out our series of brief, 5-minute videos for First Responders which cover the following scenarios: **Wandering Individual**, **Making a House Call**, **Stopped in Traffic**, and **Home Confrontation**. These videos are available here: [bit.ly/AlzOCFirstResponderVideos](https://bit.ly/AlzOCFirstResponderVideos)

**Call our Helpline 844-373-4400:** For more suggestions on how to handle challenging situations, give us a call!