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](bit.ly/AlzOCFirstResponderVideos)

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