



M A R A M A

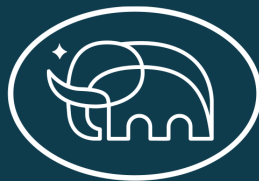
Conversation Guide

How to talk to a loved one
about memory problems.

INTRODUCTION



Talking to a loved one about memory problems and what to do next can be extremely challenging. There are often not only lapses in memory to contend with but also family dynamics, financial considerations, and fear of the unknown for everyone involved.



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If you are planning to discuss your family's options over the holiday consider these factors:

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LIMIT DISTRACTIONS

If your loved one is struggling with memory loss even small distractions like the sounds of an alert on your phone or a child coming into the room can unsettle the conversation. Keep in mind that many people who struggle with memory loss also have difficulty hearing so keeping background noise to a minimum can also help.



SPEAK NATURALLY AND STAY CALM

Often people with memory loss will have trouble remembering the words you said but they will remember the feeling of the conversation.

Speaking calmly, naturally and avoiding raising your voice, crying or otherwise sparking negative emotion will help your loved one know you are there to be supportive and get them the care they need.

Although this may be emotional and frightening for you, imagine how it feels for your loved one who may be losing independence and fearful about what is next.



INVITE THE RIGHT PEOPLE

It may not be appropriate for everyone to be involved and the more people talking the more confusing the conversation may be for your loved one.

Consider who it is necessary to have present and catch everyone else up later.



BE PATIENT AND AVOID CUTTING THEM OFF

Allow a little extra time for your loved one to reply. They may be struggling for a word and just need the space to remember. Jumping in can derail their thought process. Remember you can express your love by just listening and being attentive.



PLAN THE CONVERSATION FOR EARLY IN THE DAY

Sundowning is a known phenomenon for those who suffer with dementia. Often their symptoms of memory loss and anxiety increases in the afternoon or early evening.

Avoiding complex or stressful conversations to focus on music, art or other activities they enjoy is best during sundowning.



PLAN A SPECIFIC WAY TO START THE CONVERSATION

Then acknowledge the conversation may not go as planned. When discussing difficult things with your loved one who is experiencing memory loss they may respond in a way they wouldn't have in the past.

You are both exploring new territory. Avoid judgement or jumping to a decision the first time you discuss the issue.



OFFER YOUR SUPPORT

It may take your loved one time to process the information you have shared.

Address their fears and offer that there is hope and there are some answers, especially the earlier you take action.



BE PROACTIVE

Siblings and other descendants of those who suffer with dementia may want to explore their genetic risk with their doctors and explore how to prevent cognitive decline.

This challenging disease is much easier to prevent and treat early than try to reverse as it progresses.

LET US HELP

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