



Communication and Alzheimer's Disease

DEFINITION

Alzheimer's disease is a type of dementia that causes problems with memory, thinking, and behavior. Symptoms usually develop slowly and get worse over time, becoming severe enough to interfere with daily functioning.

Source: alz.org



HOW IT MAY IMPACT COMMUNICATION

- Communication can look different day by day and hour by hour
- Communication may be more effective during certain times of the day
- May need more time to process communication
- May lose train of thought
- May forget what was communicated minutes ago
- May have difficulty thinking of the words they want to say
- May communicate more through behaviors and touch rather than words
- May not be able to empathize and see others' perspectives
- Feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, fear, or depression may lead to social withdrawal



STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COMMUNICATION

- Ask the person directly how to best communicate with them
- Sentences should be direct and short
- Don't assume the individual does/doesn't understand; this may fluctuate
- Tune into their facial expressions, body language, tone, and behaviors to recognize communication attempts and respond accordingly
- Use touch to make a connection
- Use senses such as scents to make connections to people and memories
- Remind the person of your name
- Get their attention by using their name before beginning a communication attempt (if possible, establish eye contact or give a touch cue)
- It's best for one person to speak at a time and avoid speaking above other noise
- Offer choices instead of open-ended questions
- Be aware of your facial expressions, tone, and body language
- Multiple approaches may be helpful - including notes, calendars, pictures, labels, and lists to support communication
- Don't comment on their repetition of phrases or questions



THE KEY to achieving effective communication with a person who has Alzheimer's disease is for the listener to intentionally

engage in the process and accept the responsibility for it. How an individual is impacted will vary and communication access depends on individual needs, looking different for each person.

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877-231-4244

The ASERT Collaborative is funded by the Office of Developmental Programs, PA Department of Human Services.