

WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

SIGNS OF DEMENTIA / ALZHEIMER'S

- Trouble finding words or putting together a complete sentence
- Repetition; Short term memory loss
- Difficulty with ambulation (poor balance, shuffling)
- Difficulty problem solving and/or comprehending instructions
- Confused about where they are or where they need to be
- Blank or confused facial expression

*These signs might be something you observe yourself, or
are symptoms reported by a caregiver.*

PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA / ALZHEIMER'S CAN

- Participate in their care planning
- Understand complex situations when good communication tips are used
- Have good days and bad days
- Get agitated & may respond with resistance if rushed, hurried, or pressed

COMMUNICATION TIPS & TECHNIQUES

When Having a Conversation:

- Approach from the front at eye-level
- Use a calm, low (volume) voice
- Make and maintain eye contact
- Limit distractions
- Ensure one person talking at a time
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Identify yourself
- Use their name (if possible)



DON'T

- Don't try to reason or explain
- Don't deny expression of emotion (fear, anger, sorrow)
- Don't take their accusations personally
- Don't argue or correct them
- Don't use the word "no"

DO

- Offer comfort, reassurance, & encouragement
- Use simple language and short sentences; ask one question at a time
- Connect and engage
- Pay attention to their emotions and non-verbal communication
- Give extra time for the person to process what you are saying and to respond
- Respond creatively rather than practically

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Alzheimer's Association MA/NH Chapter

24/7 Helpline 800.272.3900

The Alzheimer's Association is here all day, every day for people facing Alzheimer's disease through our free 24/7 Helpline. Our Helpline provides reliable information and support to all those who need assistance, such as individuals living with memory loss, Alzheimer's or another dementia, caregivers, health care professionals and the public.

Our highly trained and knowledgeable staff can help you with:

- Understanding memory loss, dementia and Alzheimer's
- Medications and other treatment options
- General information about aging and brain health
- Skills to provide quality care and to find the best care from professionals
- Legal, financial and living-arrangement decisions

Our Helpline also features:

- Confidential care consultation provided by master's level clinicians who can help with decision-making support, crisis assistance and education on issues families face every day
- Help in a caller's preferred language using our translation service that features more than 200 languages and dialects
- Referrals to local community programs, services and ongoing support

How can the Helpline help you in working with Persons with dementia?

- If you are concerned that an elder with whom you are working is showing signs of dementia, you can call the 24/7 Helpline to receive professional advice on how to best assist him/her.
- If you are working with a caregiver whose loved is showing signs of dementia or has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or related dementia, you can encourage them to call the 24/7 Helpline to receive guidance.

Alzheimer's Association MA/NH Chapter

24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900 | alz.org/MANH

MASSACHUSETTS

- Elder Services in Massachusetts: 800.AGE.INFO
- Massachusetts Adult Protective Services: 800.922.2275

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- Elder Services in New Hampshire: 866.634.9412
- New Hampshire Adult Protective Services: 603.271.7014