

**Helping
with
Memory Loss**



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Helping with Memory Loss

- The effects of memory loss on the person's life
- Memory loss and the brain
- Strategies to help the person with memory loss
- Using memory aids

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The Effects of Memory Loss

- Embarrassing
- Distressing (everything is new)
- Frustrating
- Loss of independence
- Loss of communication (language)

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The Effects of Memory Loss

- Loss of sense of self
- Growing sense of isolation
- Others are often impatient with them
- Affects every aspect of life

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Memory Loss is Physiological

Normal neuron

Beta amyloid plaques

Neurofibrillary tangles

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Memory Loss is Physiological

healthy brain

advanced alzheimer's

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Offering Help

- Allow plenty of time to process information.
- If the person seems stuck for a word, gently prompt them.
- Try to do things with, rather than for, the person.

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Offering Help

- Offer help tactfully.
- Give plenty of encouragement.
- Don't 'quiz' the person.
- Be patient with repetition.



Offering Help

- If the person becomes distressed over a lost item, offer to help search for it.
- If the person is compulsively searching for a non-existent item, distract them with an activity or a different object.



Offering Help

- Encourage the person to continue to communicate verbally.
- Consider using the "*Please be patient, my partner has memory problems*" cards.
- Do not remind them that they are forgetting.



Routine is Key

- Try to establish consistent routines in the early stages.
- Always store things in the same place.
- Give gentle reminders of date and time and what you are going to do next.



Use Gentle Instruction

- Model what you want the person to do.
- Use actions and body language to convey what you are saying.
- Break instructions down into small, simple steps.
- Allow the person to do as much as they can by themselves.
- Focus on what the person can do.



Get Organized

- Reduce Clutter and keep countertops and work surfaces organized to minimize distraction.
- Lock away valuables and important papers.
- Have duplicates of essential items such as eyeglasses, keys and toothbrushes.
- Attach keys or wallets to a belt so they are not easily misplaced.



Respect the Person's Reality

E.G. *If the person is insisting that it is 1942 and they are waiting for their mother to take them to school...*



- Do not contradict.
- Focus on the underlying feeling (instead of details/facts).
- Share memories by looking at photographs and souvenirs together.



Memory Aids

- **Labels**
 - Cupboards, drawers, water faucets and doors.
 - Use pictures if the person can no longer read.
- **Use pillboxes**
 - With compartments for days and time of day.
 - Specialized pillboxes only allow access to a particular compartment at the appropriate time.
 - Most pharmacies offer bubble-packs.



Memory Aids

- Keep a daily calendar with the day's routine and any appointments.
- Post reminders throughout the house to prompt the person in their daily routine
e.g. in the bathroom: "flush, wash hands".
- Encourage the person to carry and use a notebook or small tape recorder.



Memory Aids

- Take photographs to remember the usual placement of objects in a room.
- Have the person carry an identification card in their pocket at all times that states their name, address, and emergency contact numbers.
- Consider the use of tracking devices.



Tracking Devices

- Global Positioning System (GPS)
 - uses satellites signals to identify the location of a person wearing a transmitter
 - is exact to within a few metres.
- Radio Frequency (RF)
 - uses radio signals to determine a person's location
 - can be used indoors.
 - can pinpoint a person's location but has a short range – usually less than five kilometers.
- Cell Phone
 - the user can activate a locating system, usually by dialing 911.
 - relies on the person to carry the phone and know how/when to use it.

(see Wandering package)



Recapping Our Goals

- Help retain independence
- Work with remaining memory
- Help maintain a sense of self
- Help maintain language
- Reassure



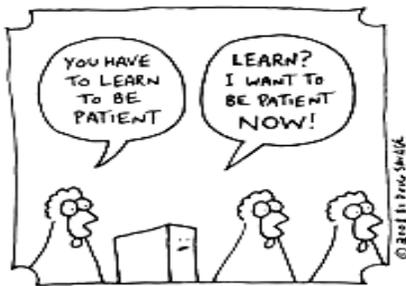
Recapping

- Respect the person's reality
- Offer help only when needed
- Do things with rather than for the person
- Reduce clutter
- Use gentle instruction
- Routine is key
- Be patient



Savage Chickens

by Dennis Shulze



Recapping

Memory Aids

- Label
- Use pillboxes or bubble-packs
- Calendar of routine
- Post reminders in the house
- Identification card
 - "Please be patient, my partner has memory problems" cards



Remember

- The problem is physiological
- The person may be distressed
- Everything seems new
- There may be a loss of identity
- Every aspect of their life is affected
- Memory will continue to deteriorate



Remember

- The person with dementia is more than the sum of his/her memories.
- Practise living in, and enjoying, the moment.





Programs & Services

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Alzheimer Resource Centres for information, education, support and referrals.■ Dementia Helpline 1-800-936-6033 604-681-8651 (Lower Mainland)■ Information Bulletins<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ In Touch for caregivers▪ Insight for people with dementia▪ E-Contact newsletter | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Education<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Healthy Brain▪ Life After Diagnosis▪ Shaping the Journey▪ Family Caregiver Series▪ Additional Workshops▪ Tele-Workshops■ Support Groups<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ for people with early symptoms▪ for caregivers |
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Provincial Office (to order the handout)
1-800-667-3742 or (604) 681-6530

Website
www.alzheimerbc.org

Dementia Helpline
1-800-936-6033
(604) 681-8651

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