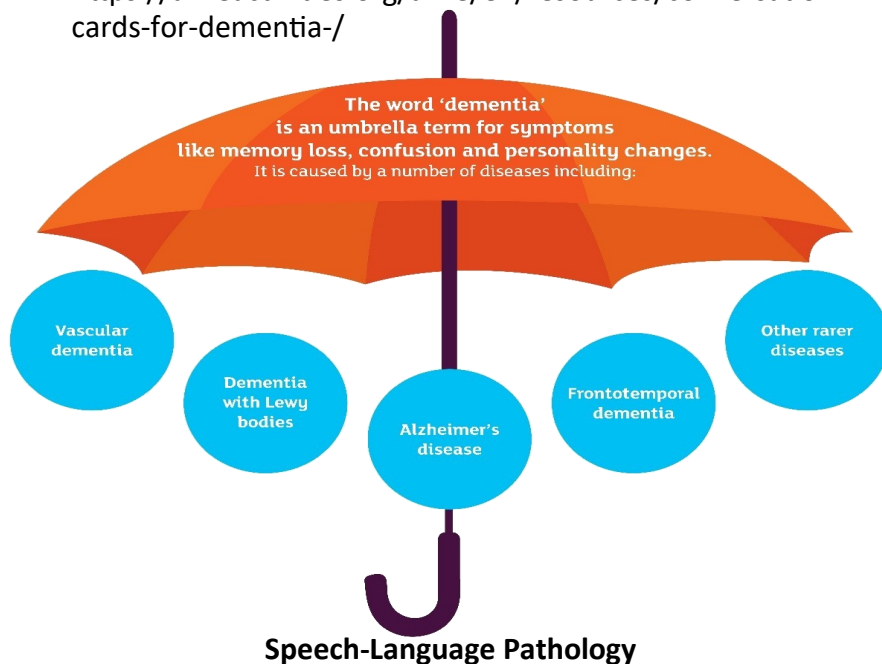


KEEPING THE CONVERSATION GOING: Tips and Ideas

- Share some of your experiences and encourage your loved one to do the same
- Move to a new topic when understanding is reduced
- Listen and support your loved one when they express feelings
- Start conversations with “tell me about...” or “that sounds exciting... what else happened”
- Talk about things that are familiar such as interests, family history, holidays, pets, gardening, music, work, hobbies, sports, cooking, and so on
- For more ideas for conversations, go to:
[https://aliveactivities.org/alive/en/resources/conversation-cards-for-dementia-/](https://aliveactivities.org/alive/en/resources/conversation-cards-for-dementia/)



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Dementia & Communication Strategies for Communication

DEMENTIA AND COMMUNICATION

Dementia is a progressive illness that affects a person's ability to communicate and interact. Changes in one's ability to communicate will vary from person to person and is based on where he or she is in the disease process.

Common communication difficulties that may be observed include:

- Using a smaller vocabulary and repeating familiar words
- Easily losing train of thought
- Speaking less often
- Difficulty organizing words when speaking
- Increased time to understand information
- Increased time to respond in conversations
- Increased use of non-verbal messages such as facial expressions and body language

CREATING POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

Encourage communication whenever possible, especially if you observe that your loved one is participating in fewer conversations. It is helpful to:

- Speak clearly and slowly
- Use shorter sentences
- Give extra time to respond
- Avoid interruptions
- Reduce distractions and background noise
- Give simple choices and avoid confusing language

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

Communicating and interacting can be hard for the person with dementia and their loved ones. Establishing respectful and ongoing communication is key to maintaining positive relationships. It may be beneficial to:

- **Learn about dementia:** Seek information on how the disease progresses and how it may affect your loved one. Take some time to increase your understanding on what to expect and how best to interact
- **Believe that communication is possible at all stages of dementia:** Always try to listen for the meaning and feelings in your loved one's gestures, body language and words
- **Focus on the person's abilities and skills:** If speech becomes difficult to understand, try new ways to interact with your loved one such as music and art. Use what you know about them to support communication
- **Provide support and be positive:** Create a positive mood by using a pleasant and calm voice. Provide comfort and reassurance whenever possible
- **Meet the person where they are and accept their new reality:** People with dementia may feel confused and recall things that did not occur or occurred in the past. Try to find creative ways around the situation and redirect with support and comfort. Avoid telling them they are wrong

Always keep in mind that a person with dementia is an individual with unique characteristics, personal values and history.