



dementia friendly
Communities

In Partnership with Senior Living Residences

Dementia Friendly Communication Tips

How you choose to communicate with someone exhibiting symptoms of dementia will shape your interaction. Responding with kindness, compassion and understanding can diffuse a confusing or aggravated situation.



Be aware of your body language.

55% of what we are communicating comes from stance, gestures and facial expressions. Be caring, smile, and never cover your mouth or face while communicating.



Watch your tone.

The tone and pitch of your voice will be perceived before the words you are saying.



Choose your words.

The words you choose should be clear and in simple sentences. Speak slowly. Remain calm while speaking. Allow time for your words to be processed and understood. Use “can” phrases rather than “can’t” phrases.

Use visual clues when possible.

Point to specific objects or use pictures on a chart or menu to help communicate and aid in their decision making.



Be patient.

Some extra time is sometimes all it takes whether that time is needed for comprehension, counting money or making a decision. Don't rush or make them feel as though they are holding you up.

Be respectful.

Never treat the adult as though they were a child. Don't be condescending. Do not command. Do not argue.



Assist, don't take over.

Offering help and support can be a very positive experience, but don't take over. If someone needs help with a task or direction, do it with them, not for them. Completing a task for someone can reduce confidence and feelings of independence.

Dementia Friendly Massachusetts is a public education campaign by Senior Living Residences.
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