



LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

TOP TIPS FOR CARERS

There's no doubt the thought of dementia can be scary and like thousands of people you've possibly worried about the symptoms and not sure where to turn for help. Age Concern has nearly 40 years of experience and is renowned for delivering specialist dementia services.

ASK FOR HELP

Don't be worried about asking for support or help. It is easy to create your own protective bubble but seeking help ease some of the stress in a caring role. Don't bottle it up, talk to someone. Share anxieties and talk to a friend, family member or support groups, it's good to get things off your chest.

START A GOOD ROUTINE

Because different types of dementia can make it difficult to learn new things, using established, consistent routines can be calming and reassuring.

Routines could be reading the newspaper at breakfast, getting your hair done on Friday's, going for a walk every day together, setting the table for dinner, drying the dishes after lunch, or using a certain table cloth on Sunday's.

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

Early financial and legal planning is a very important step for family carers and other family members. Creating a plan early on allows the person with dementia to have input into who should be in control and can help the family avoid legal problems down the road. Speak to us about setting up a Lasting Power of Attorney and Free Wills Clinics.

TRUST THE PROFESSIONALS

Professionals can help from diagnosis through to detailing support plans and caring for your loved one. Receiving a diagnosis means you may have access to medication and also financial support which could enable you to access essential respite care. They are the experts and will always have you and your loved ones best interests at the centre of any decisions or future suggestions.

GO WITH THE FLOW

Dementia can make a person unpredictable and something that is ok one day may trigger a different reaction another. Routine is important however remain flexible and 'go with the flow'. Realities are often blurred but to the other person it will be real to them, 'go with the flow' as long as it isn't upsetting or threatening. Try to remember not to disagree ... distraction is key!

SOMETIMES WALK AWAY

It is ok to feel overwhelmed and feel like you can't do this anymore! If you need to walk out of the room and take a moment to catch your breath. It is important to remember that you are only one person and there is only so much that you can do.

LAUGH AND CRY

There will be plenty of little moments that make you and your loved one giggle. Capture the moment and remember it is ok to laugh light-heartedly at things and encourage each other to participate in activities ... as these moments become very precious and essential for those times when it is ok to cry. Dementia is emotional and it is easy to put a brave face on. Find someone you can talk to and seek carers events in your area.

DON'T PUT IT OFF

Either through denial or not making time it is too easy for us to put off those important tasks from seeking a medical diagnosis or sorting the legals! Putting off an important task is not only more stressful in the long term but could also cost you money. Take 5 minutes after reading this to see what you can tick off that list.

YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Your health, mental and physical wellbeing is just as important as being a carer to someone who has dementia. Eat a well-balanced diet, exercise and try get enough sleep. Make time for you and enjoy your hobbies, avoid isolating yourself. Dementia Day Support Centres are great at looking after your loved one for even just a day so you can do something for yourself.

This advice has been put together from real carers who are currently living with someone who has Dementia. They are supported by Age Concerns Dementia Services teams.



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