



Supporting Individuals with Dementia: Tips for First Responders

When interacting with individuals experiencing memory loss or cognitive challenges, it's important to recognize that their reactions are based on their perception of reality. As a first responder, adapting your communication style can help ensure a safer and more positive outcome.

Approaching

- ✓ Approach **slowly and calmly** from the front to avoid startling them.
- Clearly **introduce yourself** and maintain a **reassuring** demeanor.
- Give them **extra time** to process and respond.
- ✗ Avoid **approaching loudly**
- Avoid **rushing** them
- Avoid **speaking from behind**
- Don't approach in a way that will **startle someone** with reduces peripheral vision

Communication

- ✓ Use **simple, direct language** and repeat phrases exactly if needed.
- **Acknowledge their emotions.**
- If they become distressed, calmly **validate their feelings** and offer a distraction.
- ✗ Avoid **arguing**
- Don't **reason** with them
- Avoid **speaking from behind**
- Don't approach in a way that will **startle someone** with reduces peripheral vision

Reasoning

- ✓ Provide **brief** explanations.
- Offer **straightforward** choices to help them feel in control.
- If they react negatively, stay **patient & flexible.**
- ✗ Avoid **blaming**
- Don't **remind them** that they forgot
- Don't take things **personally**
- Don't **question or test** their memory



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