

### Introduction

Arming caregivers with knowledge about the progression of dementia helps in the creation of an individualized care plan. In addition, person-centered dementia care is better served when caregivers are able to recognize behaviors and communication issues that are common through the three stages of dementia.

Source: "Guide To Living With Dementia," [www.homewatchcaregivers.com/pathways-to-memory.aspx](http://www.homewatchcaregivers.com/pathways-to-memory.aspx)

### Early Stage (Mild)

- Cannot find the right words to name things or to complete thoughts;
- Scrambles sequence of events when relating a story;
- Speaks of past events as if they are currently taking place;
- Cannot remember what was just said;
- Has difficulty following directions;
- Short-term memory is affected, may repeat questions and stories;
- Makes multiple phone calls to a family member to ask about appointments, people, and places;
- Becomes suspicious and makes paranoid or accusatory statements; and
- Becomes defensive if corrected or if his "reality" is challenged.

### Middle Stage (Moderate)

- Confused if someone talks fast or uses slang, or if someone uses abstract ideas or offers too many thoughts or choices;
- Needs more time to respond to others or to join conversations;
- Becomes frustrated if more than one person talks at the same time;
- Begins to use substitute words or uses unorganized sentences;
- Is often reduced to yes/no responses out of fear of making mistakes "in public;"
- Makes inappropriate, odd, or impolite statements (dementia erases lines not crossed in "polite company");
- Repeats questions and stories;
- Sings frequently or speaks in rhyme; and
- Is prone to fabricate forgotten details.

### Steps for Successful Communication

#### Steps to Successful Communication

GETTING STARTED	FACIAL EXPRESSION	VOICE TONE	BODY LANGUAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach from the front</li> <li>• Smile</li> <li>• Identify yourself</li> <li>• Use the person's name</li> <li>• If possible, be at eye level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish &amp; maintain eye contact</li> <li>• Be friendly &amp; relaxed</li> <li>• Always remember humor: smiles &amp; laughter go a long way</li> <li>• Be patient and supportive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak slowly &amp; clearly</li> <li>• Use a gentle &amp; relaxed tone of voice</li> <li>• Convey an easy-going manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid sudden movement</li> <li>• Be open &amp; relaxed with your stance</li> <li>• Remain calm &amp; confident to provide reassurance</li> <li>• Use gestures such as pointing</li> <li>• Give visual cues</li> </ul>

### Late Stage (Severe)

- Speaks one to six words a day;
- Uses words that make no sense, or may just be sounds;
- Repeats what's been said rather than responding to speaker;
- Responds to nonverbal communication: music, sound, touch, and visual stimulation; and
- Communicates needs nonverbally through behaviors, facial expression, and sounds.