Alzheimer's Care Card #2
Alzheimer's & Communication

"Some days I can't understand a word he says. When I ask him to repeat things, he gets angry with me."

Choose short simple sentences, but speak to the person as an adult. Speak slowly and repeat yourself, if needed, using the same wording.
Give the person extra time to respond to your statement. It sometimes takes a person with a memory impairment a little longer to process information and formulate an answer.
Carefully monitor your tone of voice. Even when the person has trouble understanding your words, they may be able to read emotional messages like irritation and anger. Try to remain calm and speak in a low tone.

Alzheimer’s Arkansas Caring for Caregivers since 1984

Alzheimer’s Arkansas Programs and Services is an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a local volunteer Board of Directors.

Our services include:
24 hour telephone support
Family and professional education
Support groups for patients and caregivers
Financial assistance
Community awareness presentations
Lending Library
Alzheimer's Care Card #2

Give the person one instruction at a time. If necessary, break down instructions into separate tasks.

Do not ask too many questions, this could cause a catastrophic reaction. Watch for signs of frustration. Try to use statements rather than questions. Try "It's time to take your bath now," rather than, "Would you like to take your bath now or later?"

If you cannot understand the verbal content of what the person says, try to respond to the emotional content. This can help the person feel understood.

Do not assume the person cannot understand what is being said. Do not talk about the person as if they are not there. Always treat them with respect. Lucid or insightful periods can continue well into the course of the dementia.

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