

FAQs for Adults With Intellectual Disabilities



I know someone who has dementia.
I have a lot of questions like:

What is dementia?

Dementia affects a person's brain. It makes it hard for people to remember how to do things they know how to do. They act differently. There are many different causes of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease.

How do you know someone has dementia?

It takes time to figure out if it's dementia. A doctor will do some tests. The doctor might ask people close to the person to keep track of changes.

Is there a pill to take Alzheimer's disease away?

There is no medicine that can make Alzheimer's disease go away.

My parent has dementia. Does that mean I'm going to get it too?

No. Just because your parent has dementia does not mean you will also get dementia. It's a good idea to take care of your brain. Eat healthy foods, exercise, spend time with friends and family. Continue to do things that help you think.

If someone gets diagnosed with a kind of dementia will they get better?

If they have been diagnosed with dementia, like Alzheimer's disease, they will not get better. Some days they seem better and other days are not so good. We can help make things easier for them. Be kind and help them when needed.



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Sometimes I don't understand why they do things:

Why do people with dementia sometimes seem confused, mixed up or forget things?

Their brain is changing, and they have trouble remembering because of the dementia. It makes it hard to think, make sense of things and remember, so they act differently. They can't control this; it's a part of dementia.

Why do people who have dementia repeat the same things over and over?

They keep asking the question because they might be worried about something or forgot they already asked it.

I get frustrated and upset when they keep forgetting things and get angry at me. What should I do?

It's hard for you and it's not your fault. Remember it's the dementia. Take a deep breath. Take a moment to give both of you a break. Count in your head or walk away for a few minutes.



Are there things that I can do to help?

What should I do if the person starts to yell?

They might be scared, angry or confused. Try to look relaxed and speak softly. Tell them you are sorry they are upset, and you want to help. Remember its the dementia making them do this. Don't tell them they are wrong or argue with them. If you need to, you can always walk away to a different room.

How can I help them when they seem confused?

Take a deep breath, be kind and patient. Make sure they can see your face before you start to talk. Simple and clear words help. Use fewer words and shorter sentences. Give them lots of time to think about what you said. Don't ask too many questions. Do things slowly.

What do I do if the person starts to cry?

They might feel sad or frustrated. Hold their hand and talk softly. Tell them you can see they are very sad.

How do I help them remember things?

Use pictures and calendars as helpful hints. Communicate with kindness.



What will happen in the future?

Will they always need help with everything?

In time, they will need more help. Try to help find ways for them to do things on their own as much as possible. Your staff or family can help you do that. Working together with others can make it easier for the person with dementia.

Can I still be friends with them even if they're different now?

Yes, you can. They may be acting different, but they still like to spend time with you and want to be friends.

Where can people with intellectual disabilities and dementia live?

People who have intellectual disabilities and dementia may live at home or in special homes where staff understand and help them.

I am worried they will have to move. People say it might happen.

It's ok to be worried. There might come a time when they do have to move. Talk to your staff, family or friends about your worries. They can help find ways to help you to understand more about the move. And you can visit them when they do move.

I heard people with dementia die. How do I spend time with someone when they are dying?

It's important to spend time with them. Sit together in a quiet place. Talk to them about their favorite things. Tell them how much you care about them. Hold their hand or play soft music. Sometimes, just being there is enough.



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