

Use Health Literacy Strategies

To improve understanding for those with Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of Dementia.

Introduce yourself to the individual at every meeting and explain what you are doing:

- Speak directly with the individual with dementia and not just their caregiver

Create a welcoming environment:

- Show an attitude of helpfulness and respect
- Encourage questions in a non-judgmental and caring manner
- Help complete forms if needed
- Caregivers: go with the individual to the appointments to record what was said
 - Send any concerns privately to the provider ahead of the appointment

Use plain language:

- Use simple words: “use” not “utilize”
- Avoid jargon: say “high blood pressure” not “hypertension”
- Use concrete language: say “Walk 30 minutes a day” not “Get some exercise”
- Use analogies with math: “Your tumor is the size of a lemon”

Slow down when speaking:

- Talk at a moderate pace so words can be clear and understood

Support words with pictures that reinforce the message:

- Use relevant pictures that support the topic

Limit the amount of information to only what the person really needs to know:

- It is hard to remember if you provide too much information

Encourage questions:

- Ask: “What questions do you have?” or “Tell me your questions.”
- If you say, “Do you have any questions?” the response will likely be “no.”

Verify understanding using “Teach-Back”:

- Ask the person to tell you how to handle your instructions in their own words
 - This is not a test. If they cannot show you, be patient and re-explain.

