

# DEMENTIA CAREGIVING

FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Dementia Caregiving

## Improving the quality of life in adults with dementia

*Engaging adults with dementia in physical, mental and emotionally stimulating activities can help their brain function and improve their quality of life.*

Dementia is an umbrella term to describe a decline in mental ability that is severe enough to interfere with daily life. It is not a specific disease but refers to a list of different symptoms, one of those being brain and memory function.

When an individual is diagnosed with dementia, they are being diagnosed with a set of symptoms, without knowing what is specifically causing them.

Dementia affects three areas of the brain: language, memory, and decision-making. Individuals with dementia can experience changes in their behavior and personality.

Engaging adults with dementia in **physical, mental and emotional** activities that stimulate their mind and body can help **improve their overall quality of life.**

Dementia is often described in stages, meaning how far a person's dementia has progressed. There are seven stages total ([dementiacarecentral.com](http://dementiacarecentral.com)), ranging from "No Cognitive Decline" (Stage 1), which means an individual has no memory loss and is mentally healthy to "Very Severe Cognitive Decline" (Stage 7), where the individual has no ability to speak or communicate and they require assistance with almost all daily activities.

Depending on which stage an adult is in, individuals with dementia may have greater difficulty with brain and memory functions as well as physical challenges, limiting the types of activities they can participate in.

Engaging adults with dementia in physical, mental and emotional activities that stimulate their mind and body can help improve their overall quality of life. It can also lessen their anxiety, stir up memories for them, encourage self-expression and make them feel more engaged with life.



There are ten different types of dementia:

1. Alzheimer's disease
2. Vascular dementia
3. Dementia with Lewy bodies
4. Parkinson's disease
5. Frontotemporal dementia
6. Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease
7. Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome
8. Mixed dementia
9. Normal pressure hydrocephalus
10. Huntington's disease

source: ([healthline.com](http://healthline.com))



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Caregivers can choose appropriate activities based on the individual's age and stage of dementia. Listed below are physical, mental and emotionally stimulating activities that may be appropriate to do with an adult with dementia.

## Physical



- Cook or bake simple recipes together. Let them decorate cookies or cakes with you.
- Go for a walk around the neighborhood or mall.
- Visit and walk around community events such as health fairs, parades, or farmer's markets.
- Clean around the house with them. Sweep the patio, wipe the table, fold towels or try other household tasks that help the person feel a sense of accomplishment.
- Enjoy some light gardening such as planting flowers or sitting outside somewhere peaceful.

## Mental



- Work on puzzles together.
- Read the newspaper.
- Watch classic movies with them.
- Sing songs or play music. Select music that is familiar to them.
- Organize household or office items, particularly if the person used to take pleasure in organizational tasks.
- Do arts and crafts, such as painting or knitting. Keep the tools and patterns simple.

## Emotional



- Create a scrapbook with various photos.
- Look at books the person used to enjoy together.
- Look at photo albums of past memories.
- Watch family videos.
- Have them tell you stories from their past and write these down.



### Home Care Tip:

Using different tools to help organize important caregiving information can help empower you as a caregiver to provide the most efficient care for your senior.