

MEMORY LOSS AND COMMUNICATION

Living with memory loss can gradually cause changes in a person's ability to communicate, comprehend and engage in conversation. Communicating with someone living with memory loss requires patience, understanding and good listening.

Common changes in communication

- Word finding difficulty.
- Repeatedly using familiar words.
- Describing an object as opposed to using the name.
- Easily losing train of thought.
- Returning to speaking a native language.
- Not speaking as frequently.

Communication strategies

- Include the person living with memory loss in conversations.
- Speak directly to the person rather than to his or her caregiver or companion.
- Give the person time to respond, do not interrupt or provide help unless requested.
- Take time to listen to the person expressing their thoughts and feelings.
- Engage in conversation in a quiet space with limited distractions.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Ask one question at a time and use yes or no questions.
- Avoid correcting, listen to understand the meaning of the person's message.
- Repeat a message to clarify.
- Use visual, tactile and verbal cues.
- Try using written notes for additional support.
- Be patient and offer reassurance.
- Offer clear, concise, step by step instructions; less is more.
- Treat the person with dignity and respect.

**If you need more information or have questions,
please contact our Clinical Social Worker, Danielle Hellios, MSW, LCSW at 847.882.6604.**

