



## **Dementia 360: Tips for Caregivers on Understanding Dementia and How it Affects Your World**

A diagnosis of dementia for a loved one profoundly changes many aspects of life, including family relationships and expectations. Therefore, it is important that you be aware of the changes that will likely occur and prepare to take appropriate steps that can reduce the inevitable physical and emotional challenges.

### **Understanding the World from Your Loved One's Perspective**

Experts list a variety of changes and challenges to be aware of, including:

- Memory loss of recent events, names, etc.
- Trouble communicating, finding the appropriate words, completing sentences and following directions and conversations
- Simple things become challenging
- Confusion about time and place
- Struggling to complete familiar activities of daily living, such as brushing teeth or getting dressed
- Poor judgment when making decisions
- Changes in mood and personality
- Difficulty with complex mental assignments

### **Ways You as a Caregiver Can Help**

You and other family members can help to minimize your loved one's symptoms and lifestyle changes by keeping the following in mind:

- Monitor your loved one for any significant changes or difficulties
- Help him/her to stay socially engaged and connected
- Encourage exercise and physical activity
- Keep him/her mentally active and stimulated
- "Downplay" the condition as much as possible so it does not "own" you emotionally
- A crowded or noisy room tends to increase his/her anxiety and agitation
- The same holds true for environments that are too quiet or too extreme in temperature
- Monitor and moderate noise levels
- Assure that handrails and rugs are secure to decrease fall risk
- Increase color contrast wherever possible for better vision

Be sure to utilize support services, your health and the well-being of the loved one in your care depend on it!

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