

Take Care of Yourself

Caring for a loved one with memory loss can be overwhelming. As time goes on, it's hard to watch someone you care about lose one ability after another.

Self-care is so essential! Find ways to take short breaks and time away when you can.

Connect with others who have similar experiences. They will understand what you're going through and may have helpful tips. Support groups, information, and other resources are available through **Care2Caregivers**. Give us a **call or visit our website** to get the help you need.

WE CARE

We hope that these tips are useful as you strive to provide the care that your loved one needs. Please know that the staff at Care2Caregivers is available to discuss these issues and help you get connected with programs that support your health and well-being. Our dedicated, professional staff members have also been family caregivers, and they are here to listen.



WHEN YOU CARE • WE ARE THERE

For more information:

Comprehensive Services on Aging (COPSA) has been providing compassionate and sensitive mental health care to older adults since 1975. A team of Geriatric Psychiatrists, Social Workers and Case Managers are available to assist families with diagnosis and treatment. COPSA also provides training for professionals, family caregivers and the community on issues related to aging, memory and mental health.

Care2Caregivers provides resources, referrals, information and supportive counseling to anyone caring for someone with memory loss. Call for help.

HELPLINE: 800.424.2494
www.Care2Caregivers.com

RUTGERS HEALTH

University Behavioral Health Care
COPSA Institute for Alzheimer's Disease & Related Disorders

RUTGERS HEALTH

University Behavioral Health Care
COPSA Institute for Alzheimer's Disease & Related Disorders

WHEN YOUR
LOVED ONE DOESN'T
RECOGNIZE YOU

Caring for a loved one with memory loss is often sad and stressful.

These feelings are magnified when the person you care for no longer knows who you are. They may think you're a stranger or they may mistake you for someone else, such as your sibling or someone from their past. They may accuse you of stealing or doing other things that you know you would never do. This can leave you feeling unloved, unappreciated, and even more alone.

It's Not You!

Many factors contribute to this situation. Different physical conditions can cause this specific type of memory loss as well as other cognitive problems. **Alzheimer's Disease, vascular dementia, and other related disorders cause changes in the brain, including memory loss—especially for recent events.** As a result, someone may not remember how to get home, how to get dressed, or who is in the room.

Some people may lose the ability to recognize individual faces, which is a very complicated mental function. They may be able to recognize a face from the front, but not from the side. **Vision problems** may make it harder for them to actually see your face. **Hearing loss** may get in the way of recognizing your voice. **Communication problems**, like trouble finding words, can make it hard for someone to come up with your name, even if they do recognize you.

At times, a person will become confused about the year. For example, Nancy thought she was 49 years old, not her actual age of 78. She became upset when her family included her in a party for her son's 50th birthday. She was convinced that the man was not her son, because it made no sense to her that her son could be 50 if she was only 49! This type of confusion also may cause someone to mistake their daughter for their sister, for example, if that seems to fit better with their sense of what today's date might be.

Some people become convinced that a person is an imposter or a place has been replaced by an identical copy. This can be quite frightening for the person affected.

Do's and Don'ts

Stay calm. Don't take it personally. It's important to be gentle and sensitive to the feelings your loved one experiences in this situation.

Don't argue or confront the person—it won't help and will likely make everyone even more upset. If you can stay relaxed and upbeat, that generally works better.



When you first come in the room, **stop and point your face front-on towards your loved one.** Introduce yourself by name and by your relationship: "Hi, Mom! It's me, Danny—your oldest son. I've come for a little visit." This can reduce the stress a person might feel if they are unsure about who you are.

Do **keep pictures of people around.** Create a photo album of the immediate family and close friends with large name labels for each person. Go through the pictures together and say the names of the people. Even if your loved one doesn't remember who's who, looking at the pictures may help your loved one see them as familiar faces.

Most important—remember that your loved one is likely to remember how they feel when they are with you, even if they can't figure out exactly who you are. If you are not a live-in caregiver, please keep visiting! You may wonder, "What's the point, if they don't know who I am?" Their awareness and recognition may come and go, so they may recognize you next week, even if they don't today. Regular contact is important to maintain a connection.



800.424.2494

www.COPSAInstitute.com