



# SAUNDERS HOUSE

MAIN LINE SENIOR CARE ALLIANCE

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## Tips for Effectively Communicating with Your Loved One with Dementia

The Mayo Clinic article, "[Alzheimer's: Tips for Effective Communication](#)," provides several important tips to help you communicate more effectively with your loved one with memory loss. For example:

- **Speak clearly and slowly** – Introduce yourself first and speak in a clear, straightforward manner.
- **Stay focused on them** – Maintain eye contact, and stay near your loved one so that he or she will know that you're listening and trying to understand.
- **Keep it simple** – Use short sentences and plain words. As the disease progresses, yes-no questions, and only one question at a time may work best. Break down requests into single steps.
- **Use visual cues** – Sometimes gestures or other visual cues promote better understanding than words alone. Rather than simply asking if your loved one needs to use the toilet, for example, take him or her to the toilet and point to it.
- **Don't interrupt them** – It may take longer than you expect for your loved one to process and respond. Avoid criticizing, hurrying and correcting.
- **Don't argue** – Your loved one's reasoning and judgment will decline over time. To spare anger and agitation, don't argue with your loved one.
- **Eliminate distractions** – Communication may be difficult – if not impossible – against a background of competing sights and sounds.
- **Be respectful** – Avoid secondary baby talk and diminutive phrases, such as "good girl." Don't assume that your loved one can't understand you, and don't talk about your loved one as if he or she weren't there.
- **Remain calm** – Even when you feel frustrated, keep your voice soft and gentle. Your nonverbal cues, including the tone of your voice, can send a clearer message than what you actually say. Staying calm will help to reduce their level of stress and agitation.



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## Discover our Healthy Tradition of Care and Wellness

Located adjacent to Lankenau Hospital, **Saunders House** – [part of Main Line Senior Care Alliance](#) – has a celebrated tradition of providing [exceptional care and services](#) to seniors and their families. It's a tradition we're proud to continue.

Today, Saunders House offers a range of services including [short-term rehabilitation](#), [traditional nursing care](#), [restorative care](#), [memory care](#), [respite care](#) and specialized care for individuals with visual impairments – all in a setting that is warm, welcoming and nurturing.

For more information on **Saunders House**, our short-term rehabilitation program and other professional services, please call us today at **(610) 658-5100** or [contact us](#) online.

**Disclaimer:** *The articles and tip sheets on this website are offered by Saunders House/Bryn Mawr Terrace and Main Line Senior Care Alliance for general informational and educational purposes and do not constitute legal or medical advice. For legal or medical advice, please contact your attorney or physician.*