



# SAUNDERS HOUSE

MAIN LINE SENIOR CARE ALLIANCE

CELEBRATING  
150 YEARS!

A Healthy Tradition of Care and Wellness

## Tips for Holiday Storytelling and Reminiscing

When families are planning for the holidays, they might worry about what's best for their loved one with memory loss. People with early stages of memory loss have an easier time remembering events that happened a long time ago, so talking about past memories and stories that would be in your loved one's long-term memory could be easier than talking about what happened a few days ago. Plus, being able to reminisce has great health benefits.

### Benefits of Reminiscing:

- **Communication** – When seniors have the opportunity to tell life stories, they increase their communication skills. These stories could be topics of conversations for loved ones and their families. It's also a chance for family members to learn something new about their loved one.
- **Self Esteem** – Seniors can connect to their past and rediscover qualities about themselves and solidify their sense of self-importance. This helps them find purpose in their life, which is easy to lose when one has memory loss.
- **Interests** – Telling stories and having regular conversations about the past reduces seniors' apathy. One of the worst things for seniors is boredom. Reminiscing is an involved, stimulating activity that relieves boredom and makes seniors concentrate on something.
- **Cognitive Abilities** – Recalling memories and then retelling stories to others is a healthy mental exercise that keeps the brain busy with thinking and speaking, keeping seniors' mental pathways open.
- **Connection** – Through their past memories, seniors can reconnect with themselves and answer questions about their past experiences that their adult children might have. It's also a great opportunity for a conversation between generations with grandchildren.

### Ways To Help Reminisce:

- **Life Story Book** – Detailing life journeys through a life story book is a great way to help guide your loved ones through their memories. These can jog their memory and give them visual clues from the past.
- **Memory Box** – Creating a memory box and saving cherished possessions can help preserve parts of a person's life. Keepsakes are a great way help a loved one remember a story or experience.



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- **Photo Albums** – Chances are that a family member has photo albums with plenty of pictures that document your loved one's life. Birthday parties, holidays and family reunions are common gatherings where many photos are taken and put into albums. These are good tools for your loved one to relive those moments and remember the days they were taken.

## Holiday Reminiscing Activities:

- **Cooking/Baking** – Going over familiar recipes can bring back memories of previous holidays and make your loved one excited for the current season. They can help prepare and make the food – washing and cutting ingredients or even pouring a cup of flour in the bowl will make them feel included. The smell of the meal and desserts will benefit your loved one as well. Smell can trigger memories and will help signal to your loved one that it's the holidays.
- **Decorating** – Getting out the same decorations and ornaments each year provides a familiar visual trigger to old memories. In addition to this, decorating is an opportunity to spend time together and reminisce about the holidays. Your loved one might remember something from when they were children or when their adult children were young.
- **Listening to Holiday Music** – Music is a big memory trigger. Your loved one might remember the lyrics to some familiar, favorite holiday tunes, or other memories could resurface because of the music.

Helping your loved one reminisce will make their holiday season happier and more significant. They will feel included and enjoy the time they spend with their family. Bringing visual cues like photo albums, along with letting your loved one participate in traditions like cooking and decorating, will help them remember cherished memories from their past.

## Discover Our Healthy Tradition of Care and Wellness

Located adjacent to Lankenau Medical Center, 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.



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**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.**

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