

# Steps to Take After a Diagnosis of Dementia

Once a person has received a diagnosis of dementia, their care and support needs should be reassessed in light of this diagnosis. As far as is possible the person should remain in their usual routine, with adaptations and support if necessary and reasonable adjustments are made.

There are a number of practical steps that can be taken to support the person. These include:

- [Making the house dementia friendly](#): This will help the person to maintain their independence, for example, by being able to navigate around their kitchen or find their way to the toilet
- Support services such as [Admiral Nurse](#) services
- Encouraging the person living with dementia to continue the things they still enjoy. At the same time, start making allowances for the things the person can no longer do
- Thinking about how you communicate. Many people have difficulties communicating, understanding what's been said, or processing and remembering information. Think about the things that worked prior to the person developing dementia, as these methods might still work; however, you may have to change some methods of communication. It is generally good advice to keep explanations simple, sentences short and to ask less questions. (See Dementia UK's leaflet on [Tips for communication](#))
- Continuing to support choices but keep things as simple as possible. Don't seek to control the person: although their cognition may be impaired, every effort should be made to ensure that the person remains in control of their day to day life allowing more time. Feeling rushed can cause people with dementia to feel increased pressure and can in fact mean that tasks take longer, as the person gets more stressed and confused
- Concentrating on feelings and emotions; look for opportunities to create laughter and joy. A person with dementia might not remember what you said, but they will remember how you made them feel
- Ensuring physical health is looked after. Things like chest infections/urine infections/constipation/pain/hearing and sight loss can all make the person's dementia seem worse. It is therefore important you look out for these illnesses or conditions if the person with dementia seems to be struggling more, and make sure to visit your GP
- Ensuring the person is eating and drinking well (never assume they are). Look for signs of hunger or thirst and be alert for weight loss, malnutrition and dehydration (See Dementia UK's leaflet on [eating and drinking](#) and MacIntyre's resources on [eating and drinking](#))
- Encouraging as much physical activity as the person can manage to help boost their wellbeing and help them to remain mobile
- Supporting good sleep habits. Being sleep deprived can make a person's dementia symptoms more acute (See Dementia UK's leaflet on [Good habits for bedtime](#))
- Encouraging healthy lifestyle choices, like reducing or stopping alcohol intake and smoking
- Engaging in life story work (See Dementia UK's [life story work](#) and MacIntyre's resources on [Life story](#))
- Supporting their peers and friends to understand the changes that are happening to their friend's brain.