

7 Things Not to Say to Someone with Dementia (and What to Say Instead)

Caregiver Communication

Supporting Families Together

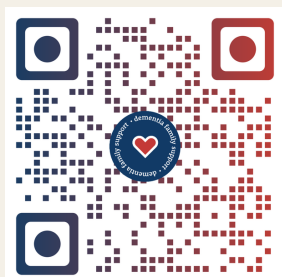
When someone you love is living with dementia, communication begins to change. Conversations may feel repetitive, confusing, or emotionally charged. Many caregivers instinctively try to correct, remind, or reorient their loved one. While these responses come from a place of love, they can sometimes increase frustration or distress. Dementia changes how the brain processes information, stores memories, and understands the world around them. Because of this, the way we communicate matters more than ever. A small shift in language can reduce anxiety, prevent arguments, and strengthen your connection.

Here are seven common phrases to avoid — and what to say instead.



You Don't Have to Navigate Dementia Alone

At Dementia Family Support we help families and care partners better understand dementia through education, coaching, and compassionate guidance. Together, we can make this journey a little easier.



✗ "Don't you remember?"

✓ "She called earlier and said she loves you."
*Avoid pointing out memory loss.
Offer reassurance instead.*

✗ "I already told you that

✓ "We leave at 2 o'clock. We have plenty of time."
Repetition is a symptom — not intentional behavior.

✗ "You're wrong."

✓ "Tell me more about that."
Validation reduces conflict and keeps connection intact.

✗ "Your spouse died."

✓ "You really love him."
Focus on emotional comfort rather than painful correction.

✗ "Why are you doing that?"

✓ "Can I help you find something?"
Lead with support instead of criticism.

✗ "You live here now."

✓ "You're safe here."
Reassurance often works better than explanation.

✗ "Calm down."

✓ "That sounds frustrating."
Acknowledge feelings before trying to solve the problem.