



## Talking About Memory Concerns

*A guide for families who want to start the conversation.*

When someone we love starts forgetting things, getting confused, or acting differently, it can be hard to know what to do—or how to bring it up. You might worry about upsetting them. You might not know what to say.

This guide can help you have the conversation in a kind and respectful way.

### When to talk

- Choose a calm, quiet time—not when the person is upset or distracted.
- Make sure there's enough time and privacy.
- Start when you notice changes—don't wait for things to get worse.

### How to begin

Here are a few gentle ways to start the conversation:

- “I’ve noticed you’ve been forgetting things lately. Is that something you’ve noticed too?”
- “Sometimes you seem confused, and I wonder if you’ve felt that way yourself.”
- “I care about you, and I want to understand what you’re going through.”
- “Would it be okay if we talk to someone at the health centre, just to check in?”

## Tips for approaching Elders kindly

- Show respect. Sit beside them rather than standing over them.
- Use a warm tone—not forceful or demanding.
- Ask for their thoughts. Invite discussion, not argument.
- Speak clearly, using simple words.
- Give them time to respond. Silence is okay.

## Dos and don'ts for talking about memory concerns

DO	DON'T
Speak slowly and clearly.	Don't interrupt or talk over them.
Use non-verbal cues like eye contact and a gentle touch.	Don't argue about facts or correct them harshly.
Focus on care and safety, not blame.	Don't say, "You're wrong" or "You just said that."
Repeat yourself if needed—calmly and without frustration.	Don't rush the conversation or expect quick decisions.
Let them be part of the decision-making whenever possible.	Don't shame or embarrass the person.

## What to do after the conversation

- Offer to visit the health centre together.
- Suggest small next steps: "Let's talk to the nurse," or "Let's write down what we've noticed."
- Keep checking in—this may take more than one conversation.
- Involve other trusted family members if needed.

**Even if the person isn't ready to talk, you've opened the door with care and respect.**