



**What to do if
someone for
whom you care
is losing
memory**

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- ◆ **Suspecting someone is losing their memory, usually occurs gradually**
- ◆ **May include changes in behaviour and changes in personality**
 - **Out of character behaviour**
 - **“Just not himself”**
- ◆ **Signs of memory loss may be subtle and not consistent**
- ◆ **Insidious nature may cause one to doubt own judgement**



Becoming informed

- ◆ **Talk to your local doctor**
- ◆ **Learn as much as possible about memory loss**
- ◆ **Literature and internet review
www.alzheimers.org.au**
- ◆ **Understand the symptoms of memory loss**
- ◆ **Sharing information**



Causes of stress

- ◆ **Ashamed and embarrassed**
- ◆ **Conflicting demands**
- ◆ **Impatience**
- ◆ **New roles and responsibilities**
- ◆ **Worried/vulnerable**
- ◆ **Unresolved past issues**
- ◆ **Feeling trapped**
- ◆ **Loss**
- ◆ **Difficulty accepting help**



Signs of stress

- ◆ **Physical**

Sleep / exhaustion, eating, health problems

- ◆ **Emotional responses**

Anger, guilt, depression, anxiety, irritability, lack of concentration, withdrawal and isolation



Managing stress

- ◆ **Express your emotions –cry/laugh**
- ◆ **Keep a journal**
- ◆ **Hold off making decisions**
- ◆ **Time for yourself to recharge your batteries**
- ◆ **Foster and maintain friendships/socialization**



Managing stress

- ◆ **Maintain or develop hobbies and activities**
- ◆ **Exercise regularly**
- ◆ **Eat well**
- ◆ **Look after your health - weight, BP, cholesterol, sugar level**



Resources and support

- ◆ **Support groups**
eg **Alzheimer Association**
- ◆ **National Dementia Helpline**
1800 100 500
- ◆ **Aged Care Assessment Team**
- ◆ **Counselling**
- ◆ **Friends and relatives - support**



Future planning

- ◆ **Illness and loss are times of crisis that might require changes and decision making**
- ◆ **Who should make decisions on your behalf?**
- ◆ **Are you able to make decisions on behalf of your spouse?**



Future planning

- ◆ **Power of Attorney**
Legal document appointing someone to make decisions about property and financial management
- ◆ **Limitations**
 - **Does not deal with health and lifestyle decisions**
 - **Ceases if the person loses mental capacity to make decisions**



Future planning

- ◆ **Enduring Power of Attorney**

Legal document appointing someone to make decisions about property and finances should a person be unable to do so



Future planning

◆ Enduring Guardianship

Legal document appointing someone to make decisions about health or lifestyle issues

- Accommodation
- Health care
- Medical consent
- Personal services



Future planning

- ◆ **Can appoint more than one person**
- ◆ **Can specify / limit scope of decision making**
- ◆ **Can act jointly or severally**

- ◆ **Can be witnessed by**
 - **Barrister or solicitor**
 - **Public Trustee**
 - **Community Legal Centres**
 - **Registrar of the Local Court (free)**



Future planning

- ◆ **Wills**
- ◆ **Pitfalls of “Mirror Wills”**
- ◆ **Appoint Executor(s)**



Summary

- ◆ **Become informed /understand symptoms**
- ◆ **Maintain your health and emotional well being**
- ◆ **Link with formal and informal support networks**
- ◆ **Be assertive ask for help/accept help**
- ◆ **Plan ahead**