



Failure-Free Activities

IDD and Dementia Fact Sheet #7

People living with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and dementia have problems remembering how to do usual activities. That can make them lose important skills and get frustrated. You can help your family member keep as many skills as possible for as long as possible by:

- Breaking down big activities into smaller activities. For example, instead of telling your family member that it is time to go to bed, you might say “It is time to put on your pajamas.” Then you might say “Let’s brush your teeth.” You may need to show your family member what you want him to do, use visuals, or give some hands-on help (like taking the cap off the toothpaste).
- Providing fewer choices with big activities. Instead of asking your family member what she wants to wear, ask, “Would you like to wear your blue shirt or green shirt today?”
- Giving your family member extra time to do things.
- Doing simple, repetitive chores like folding laundry or towels.
- Changing to some other activity if your family member is getting frustrated. You can try again later.
- Making sure your family member gets to do things he or she enjoys every day, like talking to friends.
- Sticking to a routine.
- Looking at pictures or videos to help remember good times.
- Using soft music to create a calm environment.
- Considering the time of day when planning an activity. Is your family member a “morning person” or a “night owl”? Try to schedule harder activities during his or her preferred time of day.
- Telling your family member what you plan on doing before you do it (e.g., “I’m going to turn on the shower and make sure the water isn’t too hot or too cold”).
- Being aware of your body language. Even if your family member doesn’t understand what you’re saying, he or she will respond to your mood. Try to stay calm, even if things aren’t going the way you want.

These fact sheets were created by Dementia Friendly North Central/East Texas. For more information, go to: [Dementia Friendly](#)



Dementia Friendly North Central/East Texas 800-272-3921



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Resources for people with memory loss and their family caregivers are available at: [Resources](#)

Resources include the following fact sheets on IDD and dementia:

1. Health and Healthcare
2. Dementia Risks, Signs, and Symptoms
3. Stages of Dementia
4. Planning for the Future
5. Getting Help
6. Making Home Age- and Dementia Friendly
7. Failure-Free Activities
8. Responding to Behaviors

You can get resource information mailed to you by calling 682-433-0375.

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