



6 Tips for Approaching Alzheimer's

If you notice any of the [10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's](#) in yourself or someone you know, don't ignore them. Early detection makes a world of difference, and so does the way you approach the conversation with a family member or a friend. If you notice a pattern of memory loss or behavioral issues that are affecting one's ability to function, it's essential to talk about it so they can be evaluated. The Alzheimer's Association offers these tips:

1. Have the conversation as early as possible – Ideally, it's best to talk about the Alzheimer's warning signs with a family member or friend before they even occur, so that you can understand how someone would want you to approach them about it. However, many people aren't planning for Alzheimer's before it happens. If you're noticing signs of dementia, start a conversation as soon as possible, while mental functioning is at its highest and before a crisis occurs.
2. Think about who's best suited to initiate the conversation – There might be a certain family member, friend or trusted advisor who holds sway. Consider asking this person to step in and plan around how to have the most supportive and productive conversation.
3. Practice conversation starters – The following phrases can help broach the conversation.
 - a. "Would you want me to say something if I ever noticed any changes in your behavior that worried me?"
 - b. "I've noticed a few changes in your behavior lately, and I wanted to see if you've noticed these changes as well?"
 - c. "Lately I've been considering my own long-term care plans, and I wanted to see if you've done any advance planning you can share with me?"
4. Offer your support and companionship – Seeing a doctor to discuss observed warning signs of Alzheimer's may create anxiety. Let your family member or friend know that you're willing to accompany them to the appointment and any follow-up assessments. Offer your continuous support throughout the diagnosis process.
5. Anticipate gaps in self-awareness – It can be the case that someone showing the warning signs of Alzheimer's is unable to recognize those signs in themselves. Be prepared to navigate confusion, denial and withdrawal, as people may not want to accept that their mental functioning is declining.
6. Recognize the conversation may not go as planned – Despite your best intentions, a family member may not be open to discussing memory or cognitive concerns. They may get angry, upset, and defensive or simply refuse to talk about it. Unless it's a crisis situation, don't force the conversation. Take a step back, regroup and revisit the subject in a week or two. If they still refuse to get help, consult their physician or the Alzheimer's Association for strategies that may help.