10 Steps to Approach Memory Concerns

What to do when you notice changes in yourself

If you've noticed changes in your memory, thinking or behavior, it can be hard to know what to do. It's normal to feel unsure or nervous about discussing these changes with others, and sometimes talking about it can make them seem more "real." However, these health concerns are significant and it's important to get support. Use this guide and space for notes below to help you prepare to take action.

ASSESS THE SITUATION

1. What changes in memory, thinking or behavior are you noticing?

What's happening that feels out of the ordinary and is causing you concern?

_____

_____

_____

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2. What else might be going on?

Various conditions can cause changes in memory, thinking and behavior. Are there any health or lifestyle issues that could be a factor? Some examples include family stress or medical problems like urinary tract infection, diabetes or depression.

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3. Learn about the signs of Alzheimer's and other dementias and the benefits of an early diagnosis.

Visit **alz.org/10signs** to educate yourself on common warning signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's and other dementias, and why it's important to know what is causing the changes. Do you notice any of the signs in yourself?

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4. Has anyone shared concerns with you about changes they've observed?
What did they notice?

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_____
_____
_____

HAVE A CONVERSATION

5. The unknown can be scary, especially when it involves your health. Many people find it helpful to confide in someone they trust rather than face the issue alone. Who could you discuss your concerns with?
It could be a family member or friend, or a combination — whatever is most comfortable for you.

» Name(s):

_____
_____

6. What is the best time and place to have the conversation?
Have the conversation as soon as possible. In addition to choosing a date and time, consider where you and the person will feel most comfortable.

» Date:

_____

» Time:

_____

» Location:

_____

7. How will you approach the conversation?
Try the following:

» I've noticed [change] in myself, and I'm concerned. Have you noticed anything about me that worries you?

» Write additional conversation starters below.

_____
_____
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8. Ask the person to go with you to the doctor.
It can be helpful to bring someone you trust with you to the doctor. In addition to providing support, the person can help ensure your questions are answered.

Try saying the following:

» I think it would give me peace of mind to see a doctor and find out what's going on. Would you be willing to go with me for support?
» Write your own conversation ideas below.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. If needed, have multiple conversations.
Some people may not take your concerns seriously or believe these changes are due to stress or normal aging. However, you know yourself best. Write down some notes about how the first conversation went to help plan for the next conversation — whether it's with the same person or someone else you trust.

» Location of conversation:

_____

» Date/time of day:

_____

» What worked well?

_____

» What didn't?

_____

» What was the result?

_____

» What can be done differently next time?

_____

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REACH OUT FOR HELP

10. Turn to the Alzheimer's Association® for information and support.

- Call our free **24/7 Helpline** (**800.272.3900**) to speak with a master's-level clinician about your concerns and next steps.
- Visit **alz.org/education** to take our free *10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's* online program. Learn about common warning signs of Alzheimer's and other dementias and learn what symptoms to look for in yourself and others.
- Visit the **Alzheimer's Association & AARP Community Resource Finder** (**alz.org/CRF**) to find local resources, such as health care professionals, and your closest Association chapter.
- Explore **Evaluating Memory and Thinking Problems: What to Expect** (**alz.org/evaluatememory**) to learn what a typical medical evaluation may include.

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