

Being A Good Neighbor To People With Memory Loss at The Lakeshore: A Brief Guide For Residents By Residents

As residents of the Lakeshore, we want to make sure that everyone here feels welcome and comfortable. And that includes those of us with memory loss.

It's common to become more forgetful as we grow older. Many of us have experienced this – whether forgetting our keys, or more important things. Sometimes changes in memory are caused by conditions that damage brain cells (like a stroke, Alzheimer's disease, or Parkinson's disease). These kinds of conditions can also make it difficult to find your way around, to communicate, to make decisions, or to adjust to new environments. We need to be supportive of each other.

That's why we prepared this guide!

Below are some of our tips to help you know how to be a good neighbor to people with memory loss:

- Wear your nametag (nonmagnetic types are available).
- Treat me as someone with strengths, even if my memory isn't working well.
- Speak slowly and clearly. And be patient. If you say something, it takes time for me to process. I then have to compose a response and say it. This may not be on your schedule!
- Recognize I'm not stupid! This is memory loss. Being smart does not mean always remembering. If you forget things you're not necessarily stupid.
- If you have to tell me that I've forgotten something, tell me gently and with warmth, not with a "gotcha" attitude.
- Please talk to me directly – not through someone else!
- When you ask a question – ask it. Get to the point; I don't need all the preamble. "I want to know what time it is, not how the clock is made."

We don't need to be afraid about memory loss. Rather, we can look out for our neighbors. Like a Marine, we never leave anyone behind!