

10 Steps to Approach Memory Concerns

What to do when you notice changes in yourself

If you've noticed changes in yourself and are concerned for your health — particularly when it's related to memory, thinking or behavior — it can be difficult to know what to do. It's natural to feel uncertain or nervous about discussing these changes with others, and sometimes talking about it can make them seem more "real." However, these can be signs of significant health concerns and it's important to seek support. Use the guide and space for notes below to help you feel more confident and prepared as you assess the situation and 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?

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? E.g., family stress or medical problems like diabetes or depression.

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 10 common warning signs of Alzheimer's and why it's important to know if dementia or something else is causing the changes. Do you notice any of the signs in yourself?

4. Has anyone expressed concern to you about changes they've observed?

What did they notice?

HAVE A CONVERSATION

5. The unknown can be scary for many people, 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. Have a conversation as soon as possible. When is the best time to do so?

Is there a place where everyone will feel comfortable discussing your concerns?

» 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.

8. Ask the person to go with you to the doctor.

When dealing with possible memory or behavioral issues, it can be helpful to bring someone you trust with you to the doctor. In addition to providing support, the person can help with asking the doctor questions and making sure you capture the information provided.

Try 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 ideas below.

9. If needed, have multiple conversations.

Some people may not take your concerns seriously and attribute them to stress or normal aging. However, you know yourself and the validity of your concerns best. Write down some notes about the experience to help plan for the next conversation — whether it's with the same person or someone else you trust.

- » Location took place: _____
- » Date/time of day: _____
- » What worked well? _____
- » What didn't? _____
- » What was the result? _____
- » What can be done differently next time? _____

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. Recognize common warning signs of Alzheimer's 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.