

## **Alzheimer's Patients May Lose Friends Just When They Need Them Most**

-Excerpted from The Wall Street Journal article *The Isolation Alzheimer's Brings* by Clare Ansberry on October 28, 2019.

**Alzheimer's patients may lose friends because they don't know what to say.** This article lists steps to combat awkwardness of friends with someone with Alzheimer's:

1. Educate yourself ---many stages and kinds of dementia---different manifestations in different people
2. Be there---call and invite friend to activities you both enjoy--fishing, shopping or lunch at museum
3. Ask what they are comfortable doing and what they may need help with. A ride or help gardening, shopping or cooking?
4. Talk directly to friends, not to spouse or partner. Make eye contact to affirm it's wonderful to see them.
5. Be patient with repeated questions. Just answer Give them plenty of time and space for responses. They may be working hard to think about what to say.
6. Don't correct or argue if they say something inaccurate. That can add to frustration and embarrassment.
7. Offer reminders. If friend looks confused, give name and connection. Our kids played baseball together.
8. Don't ask a series of questions which confuse them. Avoid questions like *What did you do today?* These require short term memory. Better choice for someone at any stage is *How do you feel today?*
9. If going out, avoid loud crowded places which can overwhelm.
- 10 Touch is important. Hug. Offer a touch on arm or hand. People with dementia often feel others are afraid of them.