

# REPETITIVE QUESTIONING



Repetitive questioning is often a sign of confusion. The questioning may be a sign that the person is distressed, feels unsafe, threatened by something or wants to interact with you.

## CAUSES:

- Side effect of medication.
- Progression of the disease.
- Memory loss.
- Anxiety.
- Inability to express needs.
- Trying to express an emotion.
- Difficulty finding the right words.
- Separation.
- Misinterpretation of sounds or sights.

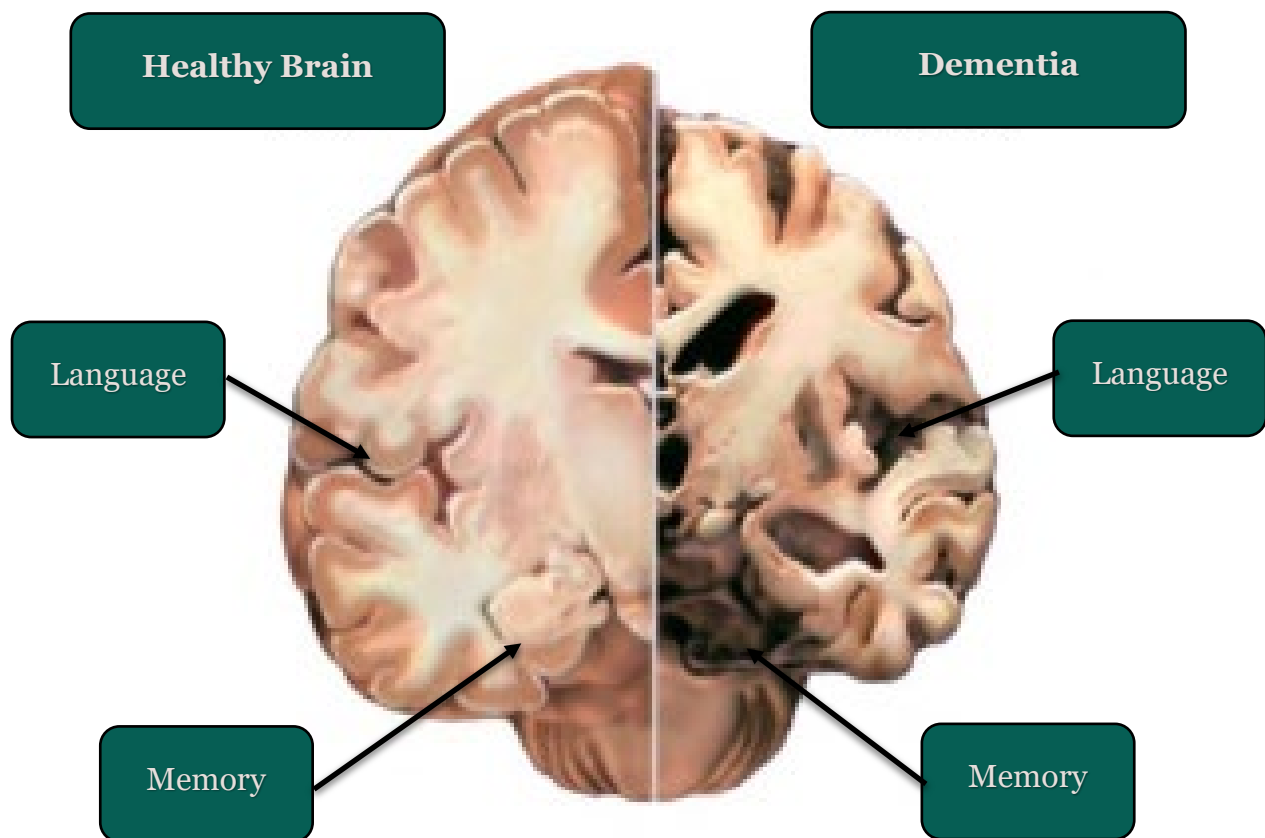
## SOLUTIONS:

- Look for a reason behind the repetition.
- Have a medical examination done.
- Distract the person with their favorite activity, or food.
- Work on your communication.
- Focus on the emotion, not the behavior.
- Provide an answer.
- Write down the answer if the person with dementia can still comprehend it.
- Accept the behavior.
- Use memory aides such as: signs, clocks, calendars, and schedules.
- Remove items that may trigger the repetitive response.
- If they ask for someone, engage them by looking at photos of that person.
- If they repeatedly ask you what time dinner is or when the next meal is provide them with a small snack, they may be trying to communicate that they are hungry.
- If they keep asking you what time it is, hang up a large-faced clock and tell them to “Go check the clock”.
- Ignore the behavior or question. However, some people will become even more upset and agitated.
- Try a videotape or audio tape. This can be helpful for some, and confusing for others.

## COMMUNICAITON TIPS:

- Stay calm, and be patient.
- Use familiar words repeatedly.
- Develop your “lines”.
- Recognize that the person needs a reassuring answer, provide a satisfying answer.
- Remind yourself that your person with dementia does not have the ability to remember due to the changes in the brain. They are trying to feel a sense of control over their lives.

This image shows the devastating changes in the brain of a dementia patient. A person with dementia brain can shrink to  $\frac{1}{3}$  the size of the brain of an individual without dementia.



The Savvy Caregiver: Caregivers Manual, Ken Hepburn PhD, Marsha Lewis PhD RN, Jane Tornatore PhD, Carey Sherman PhD, Judy Dolloff MSW, University of Minnesota, 2002

Robinson, Anne, et al. Understanding Difficult Behaviors: Some Practical Suggestions for Coping with Alzheimers Disease and Related Illness. Eastern Michigan University, 1994.

United States, Congress, “A Dementia Friendly New Zealand.” A Dementia Friendly New Zealand, ser. 978-0-473-36106-8, Alzheimers NZ, 2016, pp. 1–30. 978-0-473-36106-8.