



Helping a Loved One with Cognitive Impairment Accept Help



Practical ways to introduce support without taking away independence.

When someone is experiencing cognitive changes, accepting help can feel like losing control. **The goal is not to force acceptance**, but introduce support in a way that preserves dignity, reduces fear, and give the person time to adjust.

Patience, consistency, reassurance, and a willingness to adjust the approach can help someone become more comfortable with support over time.



Start With Their Needs, Not Yours

- ☐ Think about what is most important to your loved one right now.
- ☐ Focus on one change at a time rather than solving everything at once.
- ☐ Consider what they may be afraid of losing: privacy, independence, routine, or control?
- ☐ Ask yourself whether the change can be introduced in a way that feels helpful rather than restrictive.



Keep the Conversation Simple

- ☐ Use short, clear explanations.
- ☐ Give plenty of time for the person to process what you have said.
- ☐ Avoid long explanations or trying to convince them with logic.
- ☐ If the conversation becomes upsetting, stop and try again later.
- ☐ Avoid saying, "Remember, we already talked about this."



Give Choices When You Can

- ☐ Offer two simple options instead of an open-ended decision.
- ☐ Let your loved one participate in choices that affect their daily life.
- ☐ Look for small ways they can remain in control.
- ☐ Avoid making every decision for them simply because it is faster or easier.



Introduce Help Gradually

- ☐ Start with the least disruptive support possible.
- ☐ Consider introducing a caregiver as someone who is there to help with a specific task or activity.
- ☐ Allow time for familiarity and trust to develop.
- ☐ Keep routines and surroundings as consistent as possible when adding something new.
- ☐ Expect that acceptance may take several attempts.



Don't Make It a Battle

- ☐ Do not argue about whether help is necessary.
- ☐ Avoid confronting the person about what they can no longer do.
- ☐ Respond to the feeling behind the resistance.
- ☐ If they become anxious or angry, redirect the conversation or activity.
- ☐ Remember that fear, confusion, embarrassment, or loss of control may be driving the response.



Protect Purpose and Independence

- ☐ Think about what your loved one still enjoys and values.
- ☐ Build support around the life they want to continue living.
- ☐ Encourage them to do what they can safely do for themselves.
- ☐ Let help support independence rather than replace it.
- ☐ Celebrate small steps of progress.



Remember: Acceptance Can Take Time

Need help? Contact Angel On My Shoulder for a free and confidential consultation.

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