



Repetition



It is common for people with memory loss to repeat questions and stories throughout the day. Below are some tips to help you support someone who says the same thing over and over, and to help you cope with the situation.

Check for distress:

Identify whether the repetitive question is problematic

- **If no:** Telling the story may be enjoyable for the person you care for. Breathe and try to have fun engaging with them about this story.
- **If yes:** Address the emotion behind what is being said. Answer the question calmly each time it is asked, and be sure to answer as if it is the first time, every time.
 - Consider activities which might resolve the repetition. For example, if the person is asking when dinner is, involve them in preparing the meal.

Understand:

Focus on preventing frustration and arguments

- Remember that repetition is a common part of memory loss and we cannot do much to change it.
- Understand that the person is unaware that they are repeating themselves.
- Avoid saying, "you already told me that."

Create the right environment:

Support feelings of safety, security, and reassurance

- Identify and remove any possible triggers.
 - For example, if there is a reminder card for a doctor's appointment on the counter and the person you care for is asking about it repeatedly, remove the card and introduce a structured activity.
- Initiate activities and conversations:
 - They may be repeating the first thing that comes to mind because they can't think of anything else to say.
- Change the subject to one that you know they enjoy talking about.

Seek advice:

Always remember that you have the Seniors At Home team to support you—just ask!

Contact Seniors At Home's Center for Dementia Care
Call 415-449-3700, email dementiacare@jfcs.org or visit seniorsathome.org