

April 2021

# Senior Insights

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Permian Basin Aging Advisory Council Meetings are held at 10:00am on the following dates: **April 21, July 21, October 20** at the Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission

PBRPC Board Meetings are held at 1:30pm on the following dates:

**April 14th, May 12th, June 9th**

*Offices will be closed on the following dates:*

April 2nd

May 31st

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

17th Annual Caregiver Conference

June 18, 2021

*(details on Page 4)*



## Federal Agencies Warn of Emerging Fraud Schemes Related to COVID-19 Vaccines

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG), and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) are warning the public about several emerging fraud schemes related to COVID-19 vaccines. The FBI, HHS-OIG, and CMS have received complaints of scammers using the public's interest in COVID-19 vaccines to obtain personally identifiable information (PII) and money through various schemes. We continue to work diligently with law enforcement partners and the private sector to identify cyber threats and fraud in all forms.

### **The public should be aware of the following potential indicators of fraudulent activity:**

- Advertisements or offers for early access to a vaccine upon payment of a deposit or fee
- Requests asking you to pay out of pocket to obtain the vaccine or to put your name on a COVID-19 vaccine waiting list
- Offers to undergo additional medical testing or procedures when obtaining a vaccine
- Marketers offering to sell and/or ship doses of a vaccine, domestically or internationally, in exchange for payment of a deposit or fee
- Unsolicited emails, telephone calls, or personal contact from someone claiming to be from a medical office, insurance company, or COVID-19 vaccine center requesting personal and/or medical information to determine recipients' eligibility to participate in clinical vaccine trials or obtain the vaccine
- Claims of FDA approval for a vaccine that cannot be verified
- Advertisements for vaccines through social media platforms, email, telephone calls, online, or from unsolicited/unknown sources
- Individuals contacting you in person, by phone, or by email to tell you the government or government officials require you to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Tips to avoid COVID-19 vaccine-related fraud:**

- Consult your state's health department website for up-to-date information about authorized vaccine distribution channels and only obtaining a vaccine through such channels.
- Check the FDA's website ([fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)) for current information about vaccine emergency use authorizations.
- Consult your primary care physician before undergoing any vaccination.
- Don't share your personal or health information with anyone other than known and trusted medical professionals.
- Check your medical bills and insurance explanation of benefits (EOBs) for any suspicious claims and promptly reporting any errors to your health insurance provider.
- Follow guidance and recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other trusted medical professionals.

If you believe you have been the victim of a COVID-19 fraud, immediately report it to the FBI ([ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov), [tips.fbi.gov](https://www.tips.fbi.gov), or 1-800-CALL-FBI) or HHS OIG ([tips.hhs.gov](https://www.tips.hhs.gov) or 1-800-HHS-TIPS). For more information, contact Melissa Zenger, Benefits Counselor, at 1-432-563-1061.

*Original article: <https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/federal-agencies-warn-of-emerging-fraud-schemes-related-to-covid-19-vaccines>*

# 5 Tips for Communicating Better When Dementia Is Involved

by Valerie Feurich

When a person is living with dementia, communication can sometimes become difficult. As a person's brain is changing, their ability to comprehend and process vocabulary can decrease. Learning how to get started at communicating better can therefore become critically important. We sometimes underestimate how soon issues with communication start and may miss the early signals that someone is probably struggling a bit more than they used to.

Every one of us has been in a situation where you couldn't think of the right word, and so had to pause. In a healthy brain, the normal reaction to someone offering you a word is: *oh good, now we can move on*. Whereas when someone is living with dementia, suddenly jumping in with a word can cause confusion, as now they have to look at that word and figure out if that's the word they were looking for. And when you factor in memory problems, it's probable they'll have a hard time remembering what their word was in the first place. To help you get started with communicating better, we have included five tips that we use here at *Positive Approach to Care*® that you may want to think about, be aware of, and practice:

- **Matching your pace to theirs:** If your person living with dementia is beginning to slow down, Teepa suggests slowing yourself down a bit as well. By practicing being more comfortable with pauses and not rushing in right away to make suggestions, you are giving the person living with dementia an extra moment to possibly recall the word they were looking for.
- **Reflection:** If the person living with dementia continues to struggle with word-finding, rather than adding to what he or she said, it can be very helpful to first repeat back to them what you heard. By doing so, the person living with dementia can hear what they've said so far, which can help them continue the conversation.
  - \* For example, if a person says I'm looking for something to...uhhh..., you might give the person a moment, and then assist by saying So you're looking for something you could...\*pause\*, and see if your person living with dementia can fill in the blank.
  - \* In addition to verbally reflecting, reflecting back the other person's facial expressions or body language can support your communication efforts.
- **This or something else:** If your person living with dementia is still struggling to find a word, you might ask: Are you looking for something to drink, or something else? By offering one specific word and one overly general word, you're less likely to distract the person living with dementia from the word they're trying to think of, but still assist them in communicating with you as you've given them two words he or she can say.
  - \* Teepa recently explained the This or Something Else approach is referred to as exclusionary categories, which can be very helpful as they assist but don't limit the person living with dementia to anything specific.
- **Tell me more about it (Circumlocution):** If you're still unsure what your person living with dementia is trying to communicate, try asking: Can you tell me more about it? With this question, what you're really asking for is do you have other words you could use aside from the one you're looking for? And if they use these other words to talk around the word they're missing (a process called circumlocution), it can help you as a care partner figure out what they're trying to communicate
- **Visuals:** When word-processing abilities decrease as the brain changes, pointing at a related object when talking to your person living with dementia can help increase mutual understanding. For example, if you're trying to find out what your person living with dementia would like to drink, you could ask Would you like a coffee [pointing at a coffee mug], or something else? Being able to see the object you're asking about will likely help your person living with dementia process your question, and make communication a little bit easier.
  - \* Bilinguals: People who speak multiple languages may have a harder time as their brain begins to change, as they have two vocabulary sets to go look in when trying to find a word and communicate. So if you are a care partner of a person who has English as their second language, you may benefit from getting really good, really fast by integrating objects into your communications, not just words.

For More Information Contact  
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As you're trying out these communication tips, don't get discouraged if you forget a tip or rush to answer when the person living with dementia may have just needed a moment more. As with anything worth doing in life, practice is the key to success. Or as Jim Rohn famously said: "Success is nothing more than a few simple disciplines, practiced every day."

Original article:  
[https://teepasnow.com/blog/teepa\\_snow\\_tips\\_for\\_communicating\\_better/](https://teepasnow.com/blog/teepa_snow_tips_for_communicating_better/)

# One Step Closer

Two coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccines are currently authorized for use in the United States. In the first month of the vaccine 23.8 million doses of Pfizer and Moderna were administered to the American population. The safety monitoring of these vaccines has been the most comprehensive and the most scrutinized vaccine in the history of the United States. Thanks to the use of the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), the CDC was able to monitor adverse events after vaccination very closely.

Because the Covid19 vaccines were approved under emergency status and did not have years of research on the effectiveness behind them, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) did not make immediate changes to the restrictions set in place for visitation in Long Term Care Facilities.

In response to significant reductions of Covid-19, due to high vaccine rates in nursing homes and ongoing infection control efforts, CMS released guidance on revised visitation recommendations on March 10, 2021. The following guidance were released:

Facilities should allow responsible indoor visitation at all times and for all residents, regardless of vaccination status of the resident, or visitor, unless certain scenarios arise that would limit visitation for:

- *Unvaccinated residents if; 1) the COVID-19 county positivity rate is greater than 10 percent; and 2) less than 70 percent of residents in the facility are fully vaccinated;*
- *Residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated until they have met the criteria to discontinue transmission-based precautions; or*
- *Residents in quarantine, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, until they have met criteria for release from quarantine.*

The impact of these newly released guidelines has yet to be felt. However, it is a step in the right direction and one step closer to getting people connected with their loved ones in long term care facilities.

*Reference:*

*References: Fact sheet CMS UPDATES nursing home guidance with REVISED visitation recommendations. (2021, March 10). Retrieved March 11, 2021, from <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/cms-updates-nursing-home-guidance-revised-visitation-recommendations>*

*First month of Covid-19 vaccine safety monitoring - United States, December 14, 2020–JANUARY 13, 2021. (2021, February 25). Retrieved March 11, 2021, from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7008e3.htm>*

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Ombudsmen are working hard to advocate for all residents and their families. However, we could always use a little help. The AAA Ombudsman Program is seeking individuals who are empathetic and willing to be a volunteer. As an Ombudsman you will learn valuable skills in communication, assertiveness, and diplomacy. If you are interested in visiting facility residents and ensuring their rights are protected, please contact the Area Agency on Aging, and speak to:

**Yasmin Galvan, Managing Local Ombudsman**

Email: [ygalvan@aaapb.com](mailto:ygalvan@aaapb.com)

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Every May, the Administration for Community Living leads our nation's observance of Older Americans Month. The theme for 2021 is "Communities of Strength."

Older adults have built resilience and strength over their lives through successes, failures, joys, and difficulties. Their stories and contributions help to support and inspire others. This OAM, we will celebrate the strength of older adults and the Aging Network, with special emphasis on the power of connection and engagement in building strong communities.

There are many things we all can do to nurture ourselves, reinforce our strength, and continue to thrive. Connecting with others is one of the most important—it plays a vital role in our health and well-being, and in that of our communities. From finding joy in small things and sharing our stories, to looking at the big picture and giving to others.

Join us in promoting the way we are connected and strong by sending us your stories for a chance to be featured on our facebook page! Remember to #OlderAmericansMonth plans and stories on social media.

Save the Date!

June 18th *It's VIRTUAL!*

17th Annual  
Caregiver Conference

9am-11am

Featuring Teepa Snow, MS, OTR/L

Registration Information To Come

*If you wish to stop receiving this newsletter, please call Marydyth Taylor at 1-800-491-4636 or 432-563-1061 or e-mail [mtaylor@aaapb.com](mailto:mtaylor@aaapb.com)*