

They Say, You Say

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When your loved one with cognitive impairment and memory loss is struggling and says something to you that doesn't make sense or hurts your feelings, try out these suggested responses. Be patient. Be kind. Be compassionate.

Meet them where they are today. Introducing your reality will only shut them down.

They say...	You say...
You didn't tell me about that	I'm sorry. I thought I did. Let's write it down for so both of us remember.
The bus is late	Darn bus! Let me check the schedule for you.
Someone stole my purse/keys/etc.	Let's check around one last time. I might have missed it the first I looked.
Someone else's name instead of yours	I love you, {Mom/Dad/name}. I'm your son/daughter/spouse/friend {your first name}. {Name they used} is doing well.
When are we leaving?	Not quite yet. We have a couple more things to do.
I want to go home	Home is a wonderful place isn't it? What's the best part of being home? Let's go look in your apartment at some of our favorite things.
"I don't want to go for a walk/leave their room/eat in the dining room."	Make it about YOU, not them. "My doctor says I need to exercise/socialize more. I'd love for you to help me with that. Will you walk with me?" This gives them a purpose and makes them feel needed.

Wording Replacements

- Not "No, that's not right." **Say** "Let's try a new way." Or "Could we try this way?"
- Not "Nursing Home." **Say** "Senior Living."
- Not "Diaper." **Say** "Underwear."
- Not "Daycare." Say "Activity Center."
- No baby talk. Have an adult conversation in simple sentences. Don't ramble. One idea at a time is best.
- Avoid saying "Don't you remember?" They don't and you're just reminding them of that which makes them sad. Start with "I remember when we..."