



Global Deterioration Scale (GDS)

- The Global Deterioration Scale is a 7 point scale.
- Staging using the GDS helps families and caregivers understand the cognitive deficits and set **realistic goals** for their loved one with a diagnosis of dementia.

Stage	
1	No Cognitive Decline
2	Very Mild Cognitive Decline
3	Mild Cognitive Decline
4	Moderate Cognitive Decline
5	Moderately Severe Cognitive Decline
6	Severe Cognitive Decline
7	Very Severe Cognitive Decline

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- Has difficulty with complex tasks (finances, shopping,)
- Requires daily support
- Decreased sense of time
- Difficulty cleaning and cooking
- Withdrawal from complex tasks
- May repeat themselves
- Increased irritability and self-absorption
- Loss of sense of humor
- Rigid
- Requires repetition
- Memory decreasing
- Denies problems
- May be depressed

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- Needs help to choose clothing (may wear same clothes all the time)
- Needs prompting to bathe
- Needs help with grooming
- Withdrawal from activities
- No initiation
- Sensitivity to noise
- Decreased visual abilities – tunnel vision, 14” in front of them
- Clings to familiar people and places/hates to be alone
- Hates change
- Decreased communication abilities
- May have delusions
- Perceives he/she is 20 to 40 years old
- Cognitive abilities (processing, decision-making, judgment, etc.) similar to those of an 8 year old to adolescent
- May feel physically cold



Communication

Early Stage		Mid Stage		Late Stage	
What you may observe	Approaches to consider	What you may observe	Approaches to consider	What you may observe	Approaches to consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty with key word recall • Difficulty with comprehension/ understanding rapid speech • Repetition of words • Difficulty following sequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be patient • Use short sentences • Provide short instructions • Reduce external distractions • Speak slowly • Smile and be positive! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in repetition • Increased difficulty with key word finding • Decrease in comprehension • Reduction in conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat if necessary • Use signals and hand gestures • Use short sentences and simple words • Engage in meaningful activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to communicate with words at all • Inability to comprehend information • Inability to read or write 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use non-verbal cues and prompts • Use touch • Use signals and gestures

DO's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate distractions (TV, radio) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try and compete with a distracting environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep it simple: one question at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use complicated words or long sentences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use their first name to get their attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to touch or invade their personal space if they are showing signs of fear or aggression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a normal tone of voice at normal volume 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use baby talk, shout
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignore offensive language and redirect attention if the person begins using bad language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take things personally and be offended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of your non-verbal communication (tone, gestures, eye contact) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disregard your own non-verbal communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraphrase, stay calm even if it becomes frustrating. Avoid criticizing and correcting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the person like they are not in the room.

- 1 Set a positive mood for interaction
- 2 Get the person's attention
- 3 State your message clearly
- 4 Ask simple, answerable questions
- 5 Listen with your ears, eyes, and heart
- 6 Break down activities into a series of steps
- 7 When the going gets tough, distract and redirect
- 8 Respond with affection and reassurance
- 9 Remember the good old days
- 10 Maintain your sense of humor

Nothing I do is working?

Stop, Evaluate, Re-Approach

- **If what you are doing is not working, stop.**
- **Take a moment to reflect (on what caused the behaviour and your approach).**
- **Try again with a different approach.**

Remember that the person is doing the best that they can and it is important for you to learn how to adapt your behaviour.