



Dementia and Cognitive Energy: Conversation Guide

Created by persons living with dementia through the National Council of Dementia Minds

Thank you for being here and for taking time to engage in this conversation together. Conserving cognitive energy is about recognizing that thinking, focusing, and processing information can take more effort over time. This conversation is not about pushing through or doing more. It is about noticing what drains energy, what helps preserve it, and how small adjustments can support daily life.

As we talk, we encourage respect, curiosity, and openness. People may have different experiences, perspectives, and needs, and all of those belong here. We ask that we center the voices and experiences of persons living with dementia while making space for care partners and professionals to listen, reflect, and share thoughtfully.

Conversation Invitations

Use any of the invitations below to guide reflection. Participants may respond in any order and share as much or as little as feels comfortable.

1. **I'm wondering what stood out in the video**, including anything that felt true, reassuring, surprising, or if the spoon theory applies to you.
2. **For people living with dementia**, I'm interested in what tends to drain cognitive energy during the day and how people notice when energy is running low.

3. **For care partners and professionals,** I'm wondering if there is a particular time of day that your person shows signs of low cognitive energy and the signs you observe.
 4. **I'm curious about strategies that help conserve cognitive energy,** as it pertains to the experience of the person living with dementia.
 5. **For care partners and professionals,** I'm interested in what the person living with dementia has shared about what helps protect energy or reduce mental overload.
 6. **I'm curious whether anyone has noticed patterns** related to time of day, environment, tasks, or routines that affect cognitive energy.
 7. **I'm interested in what care partners and professionals do** that helps conserve cognitive energy for the person living with dementia, and what not to do.
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Closing

Thank you for the openness and care you brought to this conversation. Talking together about cognitive energy can create space for better understanding, shared learning, and approaches that support well-being.

There is no single “right” path when it comes to risk and safety with dementia. What matters is keeping communication open, centering the voice of the person living with dementia, and finding ways to stay connected and involved at every step of the journey.

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