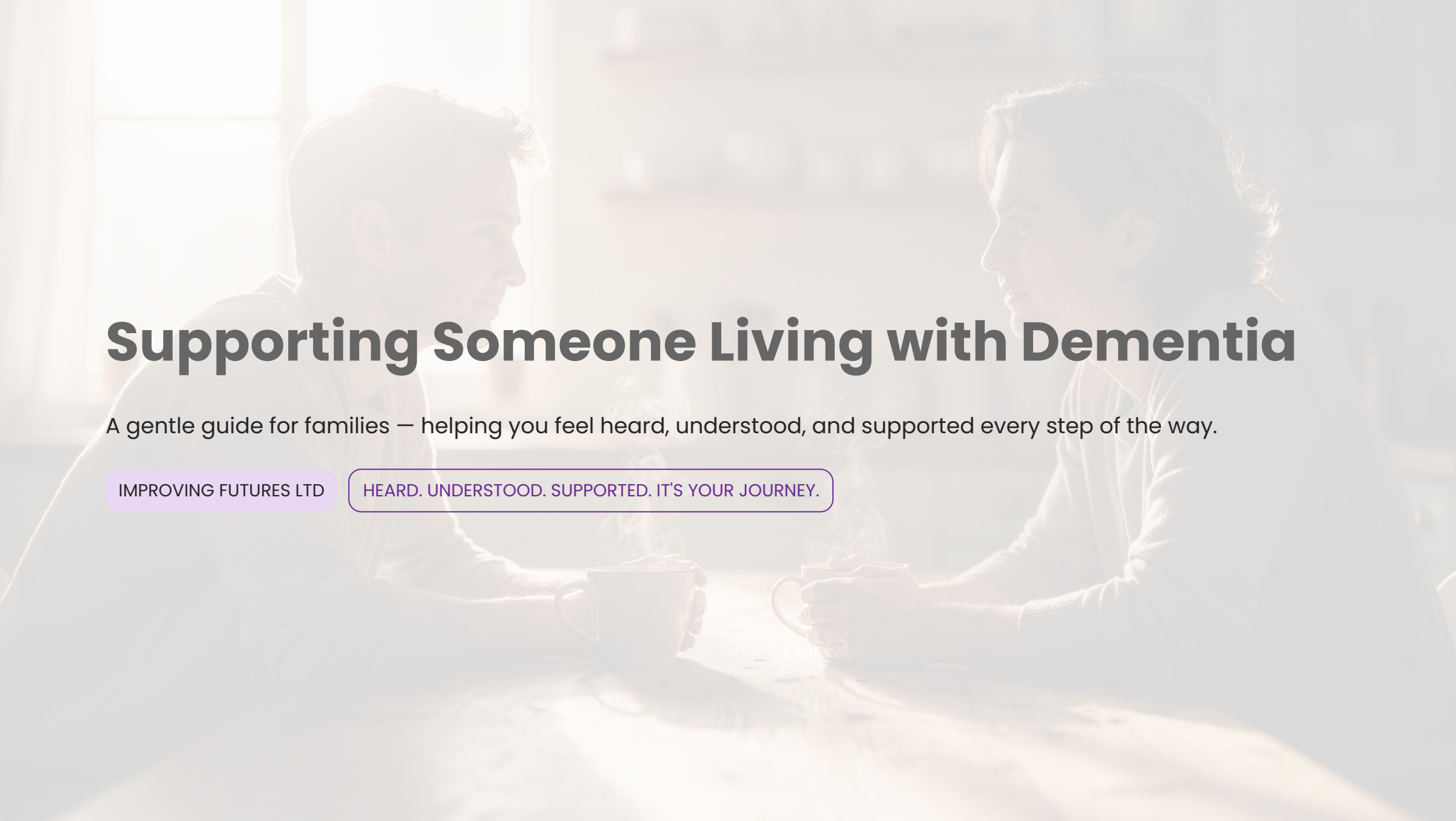


A man and a woman are sitting at a table, facing each other. They are both holding white mugs, and steam is rising from them, suggesting they are drinking coffee. The background is a bright, out-of-focus interior space with large windows. The overall mood is warm and intimate.

Supporting Someone Living with Dementia

A gentle guide for families — helping you feel heard, understood, and supported every step of the way.

IMPROVING FUTURES LTD

HEARD. UNDERSTOOD. SUPPORTED. IT'S YOUR JOURNEY.

A Note for You

Caring for someone living with dementia can feel overwhelming, especially as things begin to change. You may notice confusion, repetition, frustration, or behaviours that feel difficult to understand — and in those moments, it can be hard to know what to do or where to turn.

This guide is here to gently help you make sense of what's happening, and to offer simple, practical ways to make each day feel calmer and more manageable — for both of you. You don't need to have all the answers, and you don't need to do everything perfectly. What matters most is that you're here, and that you care.

You are not expected to do this alone. This guide is a small step towards making things feel a little more manageable — one day at a time.

Whether you are new to caring for someone with dementia or have been doing so for a while, we hope you find something in these pages that helps. Please be kind to yourself as you read — you are doing something truly meaningful.

What's Happening in the Brain

Dementia affects how the brain processes information — not just memory. It is a condition that gradually changes the way a person thinks, communicates, and experiences the world around them. Understanding this can help us respond with greater patience and compassion.

The brain is working very hard to make sense of everyday experiences, but the connections that help it do so have become less reliable. This is why your loved one may repeat themselves, feel confused about where they are, or struggle with things that once felt straightforward.

  **A gentle reminder:** Your loved one is not choosing to behave this way, their brain is doing its very best to make sense of things. Every response they have makes sense from their perspective, even when it's hard to understand from ours.



Memory

Especially recent events — your loved one may remember the distant past clearly but forget what happened this morning.



Communication

Finding words, following a conversation, or expressing a need may become increasingly difficult over time.



Time & Place

They may lose track of the day, season, or where they are, which can feel frightening and disorienting for them.



Decision-Making

Processing choices and following steps — such as getting dressed — can feel confusing or overwhelming.

Behaviour Is Communication

When someone living with dementia acts in a way that feels challenging or difficult to manage, it is easy to feel frustrated or at a loss. But it helps enormously to remember: behaviour is always communication. What may look like "difficult behaviour" is almost always an expression of an unmet need or an overwhelming feeling.

Your loved one may not be able to say "I'm frightened" or "I don't understand what's happening" — but their behaviour often says exactly that. Recognising the feeling beneath the behaviour allows you to respond with greater calm and connection, rather than trying to correct or redirect in ways that may increase distress.

Confusion

They may not recognise where they are, who you are, or what is expected of them — and this can lead to responses that seem unpredictable.

Anxiety & Fear

A world that doesn't quite make sense can feel very frightening. Reassurance and calm presence are often the most powerful tools you have.

Frustration

When they can't find words or complete a task, frustration is a natural response — and it may come out in unexpected ways.

A Need for Reassurance

Often, what's needed most is simply to feel safe, seen, and loved — even when everything else feels uncertain.

♥ If we understand the feeling behind the behaviour, we can respond more calmly and effectively — and both of you may feel a little better for it.

How to Communicate

Communication with someone living with dementia requires a gentle shift in approach. It isn't about speaking louder or more slowly — it's about creating a space where your loved one feels safe, understood, and not under pressure. Small changes in the way you communicate can make a remarkable difference to how interactions feel for both of you.

It is also worth remembering that much of communication is non-verbal. Your tone of voice, facial expression, and body language all speak volumes — sometimes more than words. A calm, warm presence can be deeply reassuring even when words are confusing or hard to follow.

Try to avoid

- Correcting or contradicting them
- Arguing or reasoning in the moment
- Rushing or finishing their sentences
- Giving too many choices at once
- Lengthy explanations or instructions

Try instead

- Short, simple, clear sentences
- A calm, warm tone of voice
- Reassurance before redirection
- One step or question at a time
- Gentle guidance with patience

- ❏ **A helpful example:** Instead of saying *"You're not going to work — you're retired"*, try *"Let's get ready for the day together."* Meeting them where they are, rather than pulling them back to our reality, nearly always leads to a calmer moment.

Helping Things Feel Calmer

Anxiety is one of the most common experiences for people living with dementia, and reducing it wherever possible can transform the quality of daily life — for your loved one and for you. The good news is that many of the most effective strategies are simple and don't require any specialist equipment or training.

Predictability and calm environments are among the most powerful tools available to carers. When the world around someone with dementia is consistent and unhurried, their nervous system has a chance to settle. Familiarity is deeply comforting — even when much else has changed.

Keep Things Predictable

A consistent routine helps your loved one know what to expect, reducing the anxiety that comes with uncertainty.

Avoid Rushing

Allow extra time for every task. Rushing creates pressure, which often leads to distress and resistance.

One Step at a Time

Break tasks into single, simple steps and wait for each one to be completed before offering the next.

Calm Environments

Reduce background noise where possible. A quieter, more ordered environment can feel significantly less overwhelming.



Small changes can make a big difference. You don't need to overhaul everything at once — even one adjustment to your daily routine can bring meaningful relief.

Sleep and Night-Time Support

Disturbed sleep is one of the most challenging aspects of dementia for many families. It is very common for people living with dementia to become unsettled in the evenings, wake during the night, or lose track of whether it is day or night. This can be exhausting for carers and distressing for the person you are supporting.

Understanding why this happens can help. Changes in the brain can disrupt the body's internal clock, making it harder to regulate sleep naturally. The aim isn't necessarily to force a "normal" sleep pattern, but to create conditions that support rest and reduce night-time anxiety as much as possible.

What tends to help

- A gentle, consistent evening routine that signals it is time to wind down
- Reducing stimulating activity and noise in the hours before bed
- Soft, low lighting in the evening rather than bright overhead lights
- Familiar music, a warm drink, or a short walk earlier in the day
- Calm, reassuring responses if they wake — avoid turning on bright lights
- Ensuring they are comfortable, warm, and not in any pain

Good to know

Night-time waking is not wilful — it is a symptom. Responding with patience and a quiet, reassuring presence is far more effective than trying to insist on sleep.

 Better sleep often leads to better days — for everyone in the household.

Creating a Gentle Routine

Routine is one of the greatest gifts you can offer someone living with dementia. When each day follows a familiar, predictable pattern, the world feels less confusing and more manageable. A routine doesn't need to be rigid — it simply needs to be consistent enough to provide a sense of security and structure.

The routine below is just an example to inspire your own. Every person is different, and what works beautifully for one family may need adapting for another. Start simply, observe what helps, and build gently from there.

1



Morning

Wake gently, no rushing. A calm start to getting washed and dressed, followed by a familiar breakfast at the same time each day.

2



Daytime

A light activity, gentle outing, or some fresh air. Familiar music, a short walk, or a favourite hobby can bring real comfort and purpose.

3



Evening

Begin winding down early. Lower the lighting, reduce noise, and move into a calmer pace to help signal that the day is drawing to a close.

4



Night

Gentle reassurance if needed. Avoid bright lights or stimulating conversation. A calm, quiet response helps even in moments of waking.



Remember: A routine is a guide, not a rule. On harder days, simply doing the most familiar things — a cup of tea at the usual time, a known piece of music — can be enough to bring comfort.

You Matter Too

It would be easy to read a guide like this and feel that every piece of advice is about the person you are caring for. And of course, much of it is — but this page is for you. Because none of this is possible if you are running on empty.

Caring for someone with dementia is one of the most demanding things a person can do. It asks more of you emotionally, physically, and mentally than almost anything else in life. And it often comes without a job description, training, or a clear end point. If you feel tired, frustrated, grief-stricken, or overwhelmed — please know that every one of those feelings is completely valid, and completely understandable.

It's okay to feel tired

You are working harder than most people realise. Rest is not a luxury — it is a necessity. Even short breaks matter.

It's okay to feel frustrated

Frustration doesn't make you a bad carer. It makes you human. Acknowledging it, rather than pushing it down, is healthier for everyone.

It's okay to ask for help

Asking for support is not a sign of failure. It is a sign of wisdom — and it is one of the most important things you can do for your loved one and for yourself.

♥ You don't have to do this alone. Support exists — for your loved one, and for you. Please reach out whenever you need it.

How I Can Help

Support works best when it looks at the whole picture — not just the care needs, but the practical pressures, the paperwork, the worries about money, and the day-to-day things that quietly build up. My aim is to come alongside you and your family in a way that feels genuinely useful, rather than adding more to your plate.

Every family's situation is different, and the support I offer is always shaped around what you actually need. Whether that's hands-on help with daily routines, guidance on navigating services, or simply someone who understands the challenges you're facing — I'm here to help make things feel a little more manageable.



Practical Daily Support

- Morning and evening routines
- Companionship and reassurance
- Building and maintaining routine



Dementia Support

- Communication support
- Understanding behaviour
- Reducing anxiety



Advocacy & Practical Help

- Forms and paperwork
- Benefits and funding
- Liaising with services
- Finding local support



Everyday Support

- Reviewing utilities and household bills
- Mobile costs and usage
- Reducing day-to-day pressures

Moving Forward Together

There is no single right way to do this. Every family is different, every person living with dementia is different, and every day can bring something new. That is why support is always introduced gradually and adapted as things change — there is no pressure to have everything worked out from the beginning.

What matters most is that things are built gently, at a pace that feels manageable for you. If something isn't working, we adjust. If you need more support in one area and less in another, we adapt. The goal is always to make life feel a little calmer, a little more supported, and a little less overwhelming — for your loved one and for you.

There is no pressure to get everything right. We will find what works, together.

01	02	03
A gentle conversation We begin with a relaxed, no-obligation chat to understand your situation and what would be most helpful for your family.	Tailored support introduced Support is shaped around your needs and introduced at a pace that feels comfortable — no rushing, no pressure.	Regular check-ins and adaptation As things evolve, so does the support. We review regularly and adjust together to make sure it continues to feel right.

📄 **Improving Futures Ltd** — *Heard. Understood. Supported. It's your journey.*
We are here whenever you are ready. There is no rush, and no judgement — only support.