

Supporting Your Parents:

Script 1

Starting the Conversation About Seeing a GP

Scenario: Ah Chi, 72, has lived alone since his wife passed away five years ago. His daughter, Mei, 45, visits weekly. They get on well, but they are not the type of family to talk about feelings, and Ah Chi has always seen himself as being the leader.

Over the past few years, Mei has noticed gradual changes: rotting food in the fridge, repeated questions and phone calls, and an unkempt garden. Ah Chi has been asking Mei to bring him meals and seems less interested in going to play Mahjong or joining his friends for yum cha.

After attending a Facing Dementia Together talk, Mei's suspicions that something was wrong were confirmed, and she realised these changes could be early signs of dementia. She decided to gently encourage Ah Chi to see a GP. She picks a time when Ah Chi is relaxed, when they were enjoying afternoon tea in the courtyard...

Mei: Dad, what a lovely afternoon.

Ah Chi: Yes, it's nice in the shade.

Mei: How have you been?

Ah Chi: Good... good.

Mei: I'm a bit worried about you because you've phoned me eight times this week.

Ah Chi: Did I?

Mei: I'm glad you call me when you need help. I've just noticed your memory isn't quite as sharp as before. You phoned me and asked the same question 3 times,

Ah Chi: So you think I'm getting stupid? I still have a good memory. I remember how hard your mother and I worked to settle down when we moved to this country 40 years ago. We worked day and night in that little restaurant in Bankstown. Your mum would wake up at 5 a.m. to prepare the ingredients, and I'd stay until midnight cleaning up. We did all that so you could have a better life.

Mei: Of course, Dad. I'm so thankful that you and Mum gave me everything I needed growing up. I just want you to stay healthy. I think we should ask your doctor to do a check-up.

Ah Chi: Sigh... I don't know, let's deal with it later.

Mei: Is there anything you're worried about?

Ah Chi: Old men get forgetful. It's normal.

Mei: That's true, but it wouldn't hurt to get a check-up—just like I do every year or two. If everything's fine, we'll feel more at ease. And if there's something, we can find treatment early.

Ah Chi: I think you're worrying unnecessarily.

Mei: In that case, if there is nothing wrong, then I'll know and feel better. Will you go to the doctor to put my mind at ease?

Ah Chi: I don't think I need to, but ok.

Mei: Thanks, Dad. I'll book a GP appointment and go with you next week.



Email info@facedementia.au
Call the National Dementia Helpline
1800 100 500



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Top Tips:

1. Start with warmth and care

Begin with a positive tone and express care for them

2. Share observations gently and show concern

Mention changes you've noticed without blame. Show empathy for how these changes might feel for them.

3. Validate their feelings and memories

If they become defensive, acknowledge their achievements and cherished memories to maintain trust and respect.

4. Normalise health checks and highlight benefits

Frame the GP visit as a routine check-up, just like yours, and explain that it can provide peace of mind and early support if needed.

5. Offer practical support

Reduce stress by offering to make the appointment and accompany them, so they feel supported throughout the process.

6. Be patient and keep trying

It may take more than one conversation. Work together as a family to give consistent, supportive messages—encouraging your parent to see a GP and revisiting the topic when needed.



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