

Supporting Your Parents:

Script 2

Navigating Conversations When Family Members Have Different Opinions

Scenario: Lan, a daughter-in-law living with her husband and mother-in-law, has begun noticing worrying changes in her 68-year-old mother-in-law. She needs reminders about when to get ready to go out, gets distracted while doing things and has burnt several dinners. Hoping to understand what might be happening, Lan searches online and finds the “Checklist for Dementia Symptoms and Changes” on the Facing Dementia Together website. Concerned these could be early signs of dementia, Lan shares her worries with her husband, Minh. However, Minh strongly resists the idea, fearing it will upset his mother and insists that it’s better to wait and see if things settle down.

Scene 1: One evening in their bedroom, Lan raises her concerns.

Lan: Minh, can we talk about Mum for a moment?

Minh: What’s wrong now?

Lan: I’m really worried. Yesterday she left the stove on when cooking phở, and the pot almost burned. She is always late getting ready, when she used to pride herself on being on time.

Minh: She’s getting old, Lan. Forgetting happens.

Lan: I understand. It’s just that this feels different. Last week she was mixed up around one of her usual recipes, and she has 5 pairs of reading glasses.

Minh: She raised us. She’s a strong lady.

Lan: I hear you. I’m not saying she’s weak—only that we should take care of her if she needs more help. She needs to see a GP.

Minh: Of course we should take care of her, but I don’t want to upset her by taking her to the Doctor. She’s going to be embarrassed. She’s always been a proud woman.

Lan: How about you keep an eye on her and we can talk about this again in a few weeks.

Scene 2: Later, in a quiet moment, Lan brings up the topic again..

Lan: How was Mum over the weekend?

Minh: (*hesitates*) She forgot to turn off the stove again. She asked me twice if we had fed the dogs, and didn’t know their names

Lan: That’s what I’ve been seeing.

Minh: Maybe she’s just tired. Or lonely.

Lan: Maybe..... But what if there’s something medically wrong? I think we should get her to go to the doctor. But, I’m only the daughter-in-law, she won’t listen to me.

(*To be continued...*)



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



Supporting Your Parents:

Script 2

Navigating Conversations When Family Members Have Different Opinions

Scene 2: Later, in a quiet moment, Lan brings up the topic again. (Continued...)

Minh: If I suggest it, it might turn into an argument.

Lan: Maybe your younger brother, Bao, can talk to her. Mum listens to him.

Minh: I don't like making a big deal out of this.

Lan: It's not a big deal. It's a check-up, like blood pressure. If nothing's wrong, we'll all feel better. If there is something, we can get help early.

Minh: Fine. Call Bao.

Scene 3: Next Saturday night, Bao joins Lan and Minh for dinner.

Bao: What's going on?

Lan: We're worried about Mum's memory and daily routines.

Minh: Lan thinks it might be dementia. I'm not convinced.

Bao: Hmm... I've noticed some things too. Mum repeated the same Saigon story three times this afternoon.

Lan: I went through the dementia signs checklist. It matches Mum in so many ways! She really needs to see a GP.

Minh: I just don't want to upset her. You know Mum and I always end up arguing.

Bao: I'll speak with her gently. We can say it's time for her routine check-up.

Scene 2: Bao and Mum sit in the shade, sipping jasmine tea. Birds chirp.

Bao: Mum, how are you feeling these days?

Mum: I'm fine. Just getting old.

Bao: That's true for all of us. Lan and Minh are a bit worried. You've been forgetting small things.

Mum: Old people forget. It's normal.

Bao: It can be normal. Still, seeing the doctor for a check-up, like getting your blood pressure check, could put our minds at ease.

Mum: Doctors always find something wrong.

Bao: Sometimes they don't. If they find something, we can handle it early. Mum, you've always looked after all of us. Let us support you now so you can keep doing what you love for the family.

Mum: I don't like being fussed over.

Bao: We won't fuss. Just one appointment. I'll go with you, and Lan can book it.

Mum: Alright... if it makes you all happy.

Bao: Thank you, Mum.



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



Supporting Your Parents:

Script 2

Navigating Conversations When Family Members Have Different Opinions

Top Tips:

1. Ensure the family conveys a consistent message

Avoid mixed messages. Agree on what to say and keep the tone unified—caring, respectful, and focused on health, with the aim of encouraging a GP visit.

2. Trusted family members should have the conversation

One or two trusted family members — a sibling, child, or close relative — should lead the conversation. Familiar people help the parent feel safe and reduce fear or defensiveness.

3. Start with warmth and care

Begin with a positive tone and express care for them

4. Share observations gently and show concern

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

5. Validate their feelings and memories

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

6. 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.

7. Offer practical support

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

8. 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.



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

