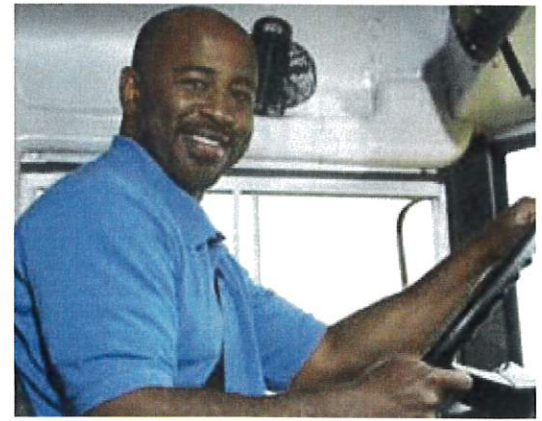


# Dementia-Friendly Tips for Drivers



**Always provide good customer service:** Something as simple as a friendly face can help a person living with dementia feel at ease if they are experiencing confusion relating to where they are going, how to pay the fare or how to alert you of a stop.

**Give clear, concise and simple directions:** Individuals with dementia may have difficulty dealing with unexpected or stressful situations, such as navigating a route change, recognizing a change in the bus stop location, or managing a delay in bus arrivals or departures. Provide information clearly and succinctly. You may need to repeat yourself if it is noisy.

**Respond to questions:** If an individual is confused, they may ask what stop is next or ask for assistance in providing payment, especially on a vehicle that is unfamiliar to them. They may ask several times for clarification and direction. Drivers can be helpful by responding to the questions calmly and helping create a comfortable atmosphere for riders.

**Remind passengers of the overall bus route and name a few upcoming stops:** If an individual seems confused, ask if the confusion is related to a destination and whether they have an address written on a piece of paper. Direct them to safely take a seat near the front of the bus. Let them know you will alert them when you arrive at their stop.

**Be patient:** Older adults with dementia may become frustrated because of fear, overstimulation or difficulty in expressing their thoughts. Elevated stress levels resulting from confusion can sometimes be conveyed as agitated behavior. If an individual appears frustrated, it is important for the driver to be patient, understanding and sensitive to their needs. Acknowledge what the passenger is saying by listening, responding politely and repeating critical information.

**Let passengers know that you are willing to help them:** Maintaining eye contact and using simple language can help mitigate the passenger's frustration. Please keep in mind that their frustration is likely not directed at you but rather at the situation.

**Report problems to a supervisor:** Most transit agencies and transportation providers have policies and procedures to address overall safety concerns and customer care. The tips provided here are meant to help drivers better serve passengers living with dementia. Find out whether dementia training is available for drivers.

# The Role of Transportation Providers

Transportation drivers and providers who are aware of the challenges that individuals living with dementia and their caregivers face are better able to recognize dementia symptoms and ensure a safe and enjoyable trip for all riders.

Drivers' observations can be critically important for assuring the safety and well-being of all passengers, and can be important in determining the strengths and supporting the needs of the riders they transport. While a driver is unlikely to know all of their passengers well, they see some individuals every day or every week. Drivers may observe patterns of behavior or detect sudden changes in behavior that are cause for concern and indicate that an individual is in need of extra assistance.

## Clues that an individual is confused and may need extra assistance include:

- Difficulty remembering familiar activities, such as forgetting how to pay the bus fare or signal a stop
- Becoming lost in familiar places or forgetting their final destination
- Asking the same question over and over again
- Expressing frustration towards the driver or other passengers
- Finding it difficult to follow directions
- Becoming confused about time, people and places

