

## MEMORY AIDS

3/2015

The INFO SERIES has been developed to provide you with general information. The descriptions do not describe the full extent of information available. Please contact one of our Independent Living Specialists for more information.

*Have you been looking for your keys and found out they have been in your pocket the whole time?*

*Have you walked into the kitchen a couple of times and can't remember what you went there for?*

*Sometimes remembering has nothing to do with age and more to do with how busy we are. Only about 10% – 20% of people older than 65 have dementia. Having sharp memory recall can be as simple as finding ways to jog your memory. Many of these tips were developed for college students!*



### NON-TECH IDEAS

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- **Remove distractions.** Concentrate on one thing at a time. Reduce or remove distractions such as TV, noise, or radios.
- **Don't procrastinate.** Do it now! Then there is less opportunity for forgetting.
- **Count items** you take with you so you won't leave any behind.
- **Stop and think.** Avoid the temptation to rush into things.
- **Start Over.** If you find yourself in another room and can't recall why, go back to where you started. This frequently brings back the memory. Sometimes just imagining yourself in the previous place is enough.
- Attend to **one task at a time** and avoid distractions.
- **Follow routines**, it will help keep you focused.
- **Don't search** for missing items for more than five minutes. They always show up eventually.
- **Use object cues.** This is when you change something to remind you of something else. For example: a string on your finger; a rubber band around your wrist: turn your ring or watch around; put a crumpled bill in with your change; tip the lampshade. Or put an item to be remembered in an unusual place, like clothes by the door to remember to take to the dry cleaners. When you notice something different about the

object it will remind you. If these work for you, great, but beware: sometimes it is difficult to remember what the reminder was for!

- **Attach keys** to a bungee cord worn on the wrist or belt loop.
- **Medication reminder.** To remember medication and to help identify, apply rubber bands to pill bottles and remove 1 each time a medication has been taken.
- **Medication reminder for one time dosage.** Line up the medicine bottles right side up each morning. Each time you take the medicine turn the bottle up side down. This will show that you have taken the medicine.



## **LOW TECHNOLOGY**

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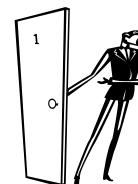
- **Write it down.** Why try to remember everything? The very best thing to do is write it down! Keep a diary, an appointment book, detailed calendar, written notes, and lists. Keep that notepad in your pocket, by your bed, in your car. If a notepad is not available, write on your hand.
- **Use sticky note reminders.** These wonderful little sticky notes can be great memory helpers. If you need to remember to take something with you when you leave put a note on the door. If you need to remember to make a call first thing in the morning put a note on your bathroom mirror.
- **Label Items.** Label with your name the items you take outside your home. Label your coats, hat, umbrella, cell phones, notebooks...
- Use a **phone list** and keep all frequently called phone numbers on one sheet of paper near each phone.
- **Mirror notes.** With removable ink, write your days' planned activities on a mirror that you frequently use. Erase it when the task is completed.
- **Organize your environment.** Set up baskets and use to categorize and keep things together. Have a basket for the keys, glasses, pills, or notes to yourself. Have a place for everything and keep everything in its place. Train yourself to ALWAYS return items to this place. Use function-related spots. Put keys on a hook by the door. Put medicine by your food or toothpaste. This method will save you time spent looking for things.
- **Use "smart" appliances.** - - Irons, coffee pots, and curling irons now have automatic turn offs. Washers and dryers sound when the clothes are done.
- **Call yourself.** Leave a message for yourself on the telephone answering machine. When you get home you will have your message waiting.
- **Set timers and alarms.** Take advantage of alarm clocks and timers throughout the day. Want to leave for a doctor's appointment by 11:00? Set your timer to beep a few minutes before. Use the oven timer to help you remember to take the wash out, take food out of the freezer, or that your favorite show starts in 30 minutes.



## **HIGH TECHNOLOGY**

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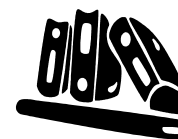
- **Record your thoughts.** Sometimes you might want to remember something, but it's impossible for you to write it down, such as when you're driving. A little hand held tape recorder is a wonderful gadget to carry around with you and record your thoughts, or your parking space number, or a phone number you see on a billboard. (Find a recorder at office supply stores.)
- **Medication Reminders** - - Pillboxes with an incorporated alarm are available. One can put the medication inside the pillbox and set the alarm that will sound when it is time to take the medication. There are watches that have alarms that will go off when you need to take medication. There is a medication dispenser that holds a full month of meds and will buzz each time they need to be taken. Consult your pharmacist to see if they offer prepackaged medications or other services.
- **Use the computer.** There may be a calendar program on your computer that when information is entered it will alert you of what you have to do today. There are also many free e-mail reminder services available if you want to remember things, such as a birthday, anniversary or event, and you then receive an e-mail reminder when the date is approaching.
- **Car finder** - - when you forgot where you parked, you can use this device to cause its lights to blink and/or its horn to sound, so you can find your car.
- **Key finder** - - It is a device that addresses a problem all of us have - - losing your keys. When you whistle, the key-ring will beep so that you can find your keys. Unfortunately, it often beeps when you aren't looking for your keys but a whistle-like sound is made.



## **Demonstration and Loan Program**

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Society's Assets operates a Demonstration and Loan Program that currently has over 1000 items. Equipment can be tried out before making a purchase. Over the years assistive technology has played an increasingly critical role in assisting individuals to live independently in their homes. Contact an Independent Living Coordinator at Society's Assets to see if we have the item you are looking for.



## **RESOURCES**

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- **Stores** - - Many of the items recommended are available at stores in the area.
- **Catalogues** - - Check with Society's Assets. Catalogues on assistive technology are available in the resource library.
- **Used equipment** may be available. Keep in mind that some equipment is very specialized to an individual's needs. Contact the Independent Living Coordinator for a list of resources. There are some local organizations that offer

equipment recycling, as well as, state organizations and Internet sites. For mobility equipment there is a Wisconsin Wheelchair Recycling project.

- **Info Sheets** - - Society's Assets has Info Sheets that list resources of where to order items. There are Info Sheets for telephones, clothing, driving, hard of hearing equipment, visual aid equipment, and physical limitations.
- Check **web sites**. If you don't have a computer, the libraries have computers you can use.

## FUNDING



There are many funding sources. Each source has its own regulations, limits and eligibility requirements, and each situation is different. Don't overlook the possibilities of combining funding sources to reach your goal. Here are some options to check out.

- Medicaid
- Medicaid Waivers
- Medicare
- Private Insurance
- Veteran's Benefits
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Workers Compensation
- Family Support Programs
- Disability Organizations
- Private Grants
- WisLoan
- County Funded Programs
- Family Care Program

*The listings on this Info Sheet should in no way be construed to constitute an endorsement of an agency or organization or its service, nor should exclusion be construed to constitute disapproval. The information that appears in this publication was obtained from the agencies/organizations listed above.*



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### Kenosha Office

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**Alternative Format Available Upon Request**