

TABLE 5.2
One Health Approach to Older Adult Clients

Prepare Your Team	Resources and Strategies
Learn about strategies for communication with people struggling with memory issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Institutes of Health website and other resources online provide strategies for talking with older adult clients. See https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/health-care-professionals-information/talking-your-older-patients. • Do not assume all older adults have dementia or memory issues. • Do not assume all forgetfulness or difficulties following conversations are dementia; other health conditions or life situations may present similarly.
Develop a resource list for social services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your team develop a resource folder with local agencies and services to support clients such as Meals on Wheels, pet care and dog walking services, and senior centers. • Recognize that caregivers for older adults may also need support.
Get written permission from clients to speak to their providers when indicated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a consent form for clients to sign to allow you to speak with their health care provider. • Keep a copy in the patient’s medical record. • Recognize that some health care systems may still require clients to sign their own forms. • Be alert for signs that require additional intervention, such as the individual’s condition worsens and/or they are unable to care for their animal. Interventions may include reporting to appropriate authorities to check on the animal and/or reaching out to a social worker.
Create Your Community Network	Resources and Strategies
Network with local human health providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop meet-and-greet sessions with local provider associations and veterinary associations. • Ask for a local geriatrician to speak at a veterinary association meeting about working with older adult clients with memory issues.
Using Tools & Patient Follow-up	Resources and Strategies
Develop written tools and strategies to ensure home care of the pet can be tracked.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve credentialed veterinary technicians in this process as they can play an important role in following up and monitoring progress with the patient and family.
Create appointments in advance with clear follow-up instructions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with customer service representatives to develop a reminder system tailored to the situation.
Caregiver Involvement	Resources and Strategies
Identify a person to assist with pet care and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a backup list for clients may be useful for other emergency situations as well. • Some older adult clients may have a regular home health care person visiting them who may be able to assist with pet care as well.

The 2025 AAHA One Health Guidelines are available at aaha.org/onehealthpartnerships.

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