

# Dementia Care - Problems with Managing Angry Behavior

People with dementia often have poor control of their emotions. It is important to recognize that angry or agitated behaviours are often preceded by triggers and are not deliberate.

The way you approach your loved one with dementia is important in avoiding angry behaviours. A gentle, supportive and simple approach will almost always be more successful than a condescending one. Your loved one can often sense your frustration and become anxious or angry.



# What are some possible causes of agitated behaviour?

## Physiological or Medical Causes

- Fatigue
- Disruption of sleep pattern
- Physical discomfort
- Loss of emotional regulation due to brain disease
- Side effects of medication
- Hallucinations or delusions



## Environmental Causes

- Too much stimulation from the environment
- Unfamiliar people, place or sound
- Feeling lost and insecure



## Other causes

- Poor attention span
- Being reprimanded or criticised by others
- Change in regular schedule or routine
- Response to caregiver's impatience, stress or irritability



## How can I cope?

1. Make sure your loved one is comfortable.
2. Create a simple environment by reducing noise, people and clutter.
3. Try scheduling meals, baths and walks.
4. Can use table with basin (not necessary must be in bathroom).
5. Allow an appropriate amount of time to accept change in routine when rescheduling is necessary.
6. Allow enough time for your loved one to respond to directions or requests.
7. Orientate your loved one to time by using calendars and a large clock
8. Make sure your loved one is protected from hurting himself or herself. Remove sharp utensils, tools and objects from his or her surroundings.
9. Distract him or her with a favourite food or activity which may reduce agitation.
10. Exercise regularly to help reduce stress.



11. Use gentle physical touch to calm him or her. Holding hands and hugging may be comforting for some
12. Avoid testing him or her and asking questions that relate to memory.
13. Try not to reason with him or her. Rationalising often leads to frustration.
14. Speak slowly and clearly, use short sentences.
15. Approach him or her slowly and from the front within his or her field of vision. Approaching from behind or the side may surprise him or her.
16. Anger and rage are often signs that your loved one is feeling a loss of control in his or her life. Calmly acknowledge the feelings even when you do not understand what is being said or why he or she is angry. Saying 'I understand' or 'I am here for you' can be helpful.

**If you feel that your physical safety is threatened,**

- Stand out of the reach and field of vision of your loved one with dementia.
- Leave the scene if necessary to prevent injury.
- Call for help.

