



CATHI

Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information

In an endeavor to continually assist caregivers in their search for pertinent information regarding eldercare, our Information and Referral Specialists address topics most frequently asked questions via Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information (CATHI). Additionally, caregivers are invited to e-mail individual questions caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org and an Information and Referral Specialist will reply.

Dear CATHI,

Question: My loved one is confused regularly and has been showing signs of anger lately for no apparent or obvious reason. I am concerned about this and I'm not sure how to handle this anger. What should I do?

Answer: People with memory loss and confusion sometimes become or they exhibit signs of agitation, anger or aggression. These behaviors can be very hard on caregivers and may even become dangerous. There are a few things you might try to help avoid and defuse angry outbursts.

Try not to take it personally. Remember that anger is a symptom. Anger is often a loss of control or frustration. Look for early signs of frustration, such as fidgeting and try to distract the person before a violent outburst occurs.

Always respond calmly and directly to the situation. Make eye contact while speaking in clear, short, concise sentences. Always approach someone like this from the front. Keep an eye out for physical clues and causes. They may be in pain, have an illness or simply be constipated. All these things can cause frustration and anger. Some medications can cause anxiety, hallucinations or paranoia. Find out if medications may decrease symptoms.

Another thing to keep in mind is to avoid confusion. Limit choices that cause confusion. Avoid situations with a lot of noise, activity and people. Do the same things at the same time each day.

Plan for quiet times. Make sure the person is getting enough sleep. You can alternate quiet times with other activities. Try listening to soft music or reading aloud.

Try to reduce stress. Notice if the person is acting lost, confused or frightened. Take a break if you are feeling angry or frustrated. They may be reacting to your mood. Plan stressful activities such as bathing for when the person is relaxed. Always allow plenty of time for all activities and give clear, step-by-step directions.

Assess danger. Make sure the person cannot hurt him or herself. Try moving five steps back from the person to defuse the danger. Avoid holding or restraining the person. This may make the situation worse. If possible, avoid an upsetting situation or lead the person away from it.

Always keep yourself safe. Call for help if they become physically aggressive or violent. Remove yourself from the room or situation to stay safe. If it is necessary, call 911 to get help.

Evaluate episodes. Don't remind or blame the person. They may have already forgotten what happened. Look at what caused the problem and see if there is any way to avoid the situation in the future.

Create a calm and safe home. Reduce clutter in the home. Provide good lighting to lessen confusion caused by shadows. Avoid changing living environments and caregivers when possible. Try to make any changes gradually.

Following these tips should help minimize the anger issues but if they do occur, hopefully you will be better equipped to deal with them.

The information in this article was taken from "Dealing with Anger" by Mardi Richmond

Note: This is for informational purposes only.
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For referrals to community organizations in Guilford County that assist older adults and caregivers, contact Senior Resources of Guilford's SeniorLine at (336) 333-6981 in Greensboro and Guilford Co., in High Point/Jamestown (336) 884-6981 or the Caregiver Support Specialist, at (336) 373-4816 or (336) 883-3586 in High Point.



North Carolina Family Caregiver Support Program
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