



Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information

In an effort to continually assist caregivers in their search for pertinent information regarding eldercare, our Family Caregiver Support Coordinator addresses topics of most frequently asked questions via Caregiver's Answers, Topics and Helpful Information (CATHI). Additionally, caregivers are also invited to e-mail individual questions to the Family Caregiver Support Coordinator at caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org.

How can I deal with my family member's challenging behaviors without losing my patience?

People with cognitive impairment may exhibit a range of frustrating behavior problems. These might include communication difficulties, becoming fixated on an idea or constantly repeating a question, aggressive or impulsive behavior, paranoia, lack of motivation, memory problems, incontinence, poor judgment and wandering. Cognitive impairment could be caused by various things such as, Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, stroke, Parkinson's disease, brain injury or brain tumor.

Almost all persons with dementia show some changed behavior. This happens because of many reasons. They may react because they do not understand what is happening. They may have unmet needs. They might be frustrated because they cannot communicate. They may not be able to handle their emotions. They may act in socially inappropriate ways. Unsuitable surroundings make daily tasks difficult for them. People expect them to do things they cannot do, seeing caregivers' emotions like frustration and anger can also affect individuals with dementia.

Various strategies can help you deal with challenging behaviors. Caregivers can start by understanding that these episodes or challenging behaviors are the person's situation. Try to look for the probable causes and reduce them if possible. Individuals with dementia are sometimes not able to explain what they want. Look at the behavior as information about their needs, and do not get upset by it. In many communities, the Family Caregiver Support Program

or another community organization offers classes and training sessions that teach skills that are useful in handling troublesome behavior. There you can receive information about your relative's ability to understand and communicate. Joining a support group or memory café also can be helpful. A support group is a good place to share your frustrations and discuss coping strategies with people who are in the same situation, caring for their family members or friends. While many support groups meet in person, online and telephone groups also exist.

It's important to remember that it's the disease, not the person, causing the behavior. Anticipating that there will be ups and downs through the illness can provide an important perspective to help, maintain your patience. Compassion and sense of humor also may enable you to cope more effectively with difficult behavior.

The information in this article was adapted from Family Caregiver Alliance, caregiver.org, by National Center on Caregiving, 2018.

The information in this article was adapted from Handling Behavior Challenges, Dementia Care Notes, May, 2018.

****If you would like to join our mailing list to learn more about programs and services available to you contact our Family Caregiver Support Coordinator at caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org***

For referrals to community organizations in Guilford County that assist older adults and caregivers, contact Senior Resources of Guilford's SeniorLine at (336) 884-6981 in High Point, all other areas (336) 333-6981 or the Caregiver Support Coordinator, at (336) 373-4816 in Greensboro or (336) 883-3586 in High Point.



North Carolina Family Caregiver Support Program
Completing the Care