



caring for someone with dementia

Not always there with you ...but always there for you

Caring for someone with dementia

Caring for someone with dementia can be very challenging, stressful, and, at times, upsetting. It is important not to underestimate the impact this may have on you. You're likely to go through a wide range of emotions including loss, guilt, embarrassment, grief and anger. Caring for someone with dementia can become more demanding – both physically and emotionally, and you may also feel awkward about any reversal of your previous roles.

Whether you are the husband, wife, partner, daughter, son, brother, sister, neighbour or friend of the person, it is important to understand that your relationship will change. Many people find themselves in the role of 'carer' without any decision having been made. Whilst it can be difficult to accept help, try to involve family members and share responsibilities as it will take the pressure off you a little.

“Mum described it as if her memory had been robbed. It was very distressing. But we did manage to have some laughs too. It wasn't all sad”

Coping with changes in someone's behaviour is difficult to cope with. You may find maintaining eye contact and being aware of your body language helpful. The types of behaviours you may recognise in the person with dementia

- could be:
- Constantly repeating themselves.
 - Following you.
 - Pacing and shouting.
 - Memory loss.
 - Becoming disoriented.
 - Not being able to 'find the word' they need.
 - Potentially violent.
 - Agitation, confusion and distress.
 - Asking the same questions.
 - Getting up and dressed through the night.
 - Sight, perceptions and hallucinations.

Try to keep in mind that they aren't doing these things deliberately, and try not to take it personally. For example, they may be removing clothes because they are too warm or constantly wandering because they are bored or believe they are looking for something.

It is understandable to find this behaviour difficult to deal with and for you to have feelings of stress, exhaustion, helplessness and irritability. It is important to find time for yourself every day, even just to go for a walk. It can be easy to put everyone else's needs first, but it is vital to look after your own health and wellbeing. See your GP regularly and make sure they know you are caring for someone with dementia.

"I am glad I spoke to the GP about my feelings of hopelessness and sadness. I had no idea I was depressed. I was just busy trying to make everything work"

Everyday Tips

- ▶ It can be very helpful for the person with dementia to feel they are still useful, and it will help you also if you encourage them to keep as much independence as it is safe to do so. If you can create a regular routine in a relaxed, encouraging environment which does not change regularly, it will help both of you feel less anxious and stressed.
- ▶ Involving them in everyday tasks, such as dish washing, basic cooking or hoovering can make them feel useful and improve their self-worth.
- ▶ If you are struggling to cope, please contact one of our Carers Liaison Workers at The Carers Centre on 01896 752431
- ▶ Alzheimer Scotland have a great deal of information to support you in your caring role and can be contacted by telephone 24 hours a day on Freephone 0808 808 3000

Notes...





Borders Carers Centre (SCIO)

Supporting carers throughout the Borders

Brewerybrig Low Buckholmside, Galashiels TD1 1RT

phone: 01896 752431

www.borderscarerscentre.co.uk

email: info@borderscarers.co.uk

Scottish Charity No. SC028087