

DEMENTIA & FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Dementia can cause confusion, memory loss, and false accusations. These tips can help you respond effectively in such situations.

Understanding the Situation

Stay Calm and Compassionate: Understand that accusations are often a result of the disease, not a reflection of the person's true feelings. Respond calmly without arguing or trying to correct the person forcefully.

How to Respond to Accusations

- **Acknowledge Feelings:** Validate their emotions by saying something like, "I can see that you're upset," or "I understand this is frustrating for you." Avoid dismissing their concerns, even if they are unfounded.
- **Avoid Confrontation:** Do not argue or insist that they are wrong, as this can increase their distress and confusion.
- **Use Reassurance:** Offer comfort by saying, "I'm here to help," or "We'll figure this out together." Reassure them that they are safe and that you are there to support them. Suggest looking for the lost item together or offer to help resolve the issue.
- **Use "I'm sorry" Phrases:** "I'm so sorry this is happening."
- **Maintain Routine:** Consistent routines can help reduce confusion and the likelihood of accusations. Familiar surroundings and activities provide a sense of security.

Supporting Yourself and the Caregiving Environment

- **Educate Others:** Share information with family members or other caregivers to ensure they understand how to respond appropriately. Encourage open communication within the caregiving team.
- **Take Breaks and Seek Support:** Caregiving can be stressful. Take time for yourself and seek support from friends, family, or support groups.
- **Document Incidents:** Keep a record of recurring accusations or incidents to discuss with healthcare providers.

