

Managing Anger and Verbal Aggression

People with dementia sometimes make unkind comments, use cruel words, or accuse their carers of terrible things. This can be very distressing, but the most important thing to remember is that they are not saying these things to be hurtful, it is their disease that is causing the behaviour.

When they are angry and shouting it's hard to keep that in mind and it's even more difficult if you are a sole carer and have no-one to help you manage the situation.

Here are a few things that some of our carers have found helpful.

Stay calm; they are more likely to calm down if you are calm. It might help you to count to 10 or even leave the room for a short time to cool down.

Repeat to yourself "it's the disease" as a reminder that they are not doing this intentionally.

Limit any distractions in the room, for example turn off the TV or radio.

If the current activity seemed to have caused the agitation try a calmer activity. Try soft music or a gentle massage.

It's also useful to keep track of possible triggers so they can be avoided.

Whenever difficult behaviour occurs, write down what happened, the time, and the date in a notebook.

Also think about what was going on just before the behaviour started and write that down as a possible trigger.

Having everything in one notebook helps you find possible causes for the behaviour.

For example, if your notes show that they get angry and start calling names around 4pm on most days, it could be because they haven't eaten since noon and they're hungry. They may not realise it or don't know how to ask for food. To test your theory, try giving them a snack around 3:30pm to see if that helps prevent the outbursts.

If you need any help or guidance, want to find out about other activities and services, or just need someone to talk to who understands your situation, Dementia Friendly Keighley is here for you.

You can call us on **07452 773788** between **10am and 2pm daily**, text (**SMS**) or **WhatsApp 'CALL BACK'** on the same number or leave a message outside of these hours and we will call back as soon as possible. Please note: Times and days of our activities and services are subject to change, so please call for up to date information.

