

Chorlton & Whalley Range
Dementia Action Group



Dementia and Behaviour Change

For carers





Caring for someone with dementia is a journey which is likely to get harder, so it is important to prepare for what's coming.

Behaviour change is the most difficult symptom of dementia. This leaflet offers some ideas about what to do.

What happens

People with dementia change, some slowly and some quickly. They become different from the person they once were, and those changes increase over time. It can be very difficult to learn to accept this “new person”. Some carers describe it as “living grief”. One important and difficult milestone can be when the person doesn't recognise you.

Many people don't understand or accept the changes that are happening, and blame or argue with the person with dementia.

Sometimes the person with dementia behaves better with strangers but takes their frustrations out on you.

Common changes in behaviour



Talking more



Swearing unexpectedly



Resistance to personal hygiene tasks



Becoming more loving, or more aggressive



Fidgeting



Getting confused about which language they are speaking



Getting delusions



Getting more anxious and paranoid



Getting lost and losing things



Only eating certain foods, or going off certain dishes



Not understanding humour



Mis-identifying common objects

Caring

Caring is likely to get more difficult as the changes increase and there may be a time when you can no longer cope.

Get support early before you become too tired or isolated. It's hard to tell other people how you're feeling but local or online carers groups are a safe space as other carers are going through the same journey too. Pair up with another carer to share experiences and ways of coping.

You need professional help. You may have to try several places and be persistent to get the help you need. GPs are a vital support - the gateway to both physical and mental health services.

In the early stages, many people with dementia will pick up on your emotional state. If possible, look after yourself, take time off, and do things that you enjoy. You may be able to get respite care from Manchester City Council or ask a friend or family member to give you a few hours break.

You are not the only one who is struggling. Caring for someone else is hard work and it's helpful to praise yourself for all the things that you are doing.



What you can do

Every person with dementia is different but there are lots of things you can try that might work, including:

- Don't tell the person that they are wrong or keep correcting them. Instead say "*That's interesting*" or "*Good point*".
- Develop many ways of distracting the person.
- Ice cream might change their mood.
- Written reminders around the house.
- Rewards.
- Having everything organised and keeping a routine.
- Having an indoor camera to show the person what they have done that day.
- Sitting outside or going for a walk.
- Clear boundaries.
- Music and singing.
- Constant reassurance and praise.
- Memory box or scrapbook.
- Weekly timetable on wall.
- Keep positive in voice tone and body language and hide your frustrations.

Information and support

Manchester City Council carry out a carers assessment which may lead to additional support.

Tel: 0161 234 5001

Carers Manchester is a first point of contact for carers who require support and advice.

Tel: 0161 543 8000

www.carersmanchester.org.uk

Together Dementia Support is an expert local support organisation for people living with dementia and their families and carers. It maintains a directory of local services.

Tel: 0161 226 7186

www.togetherdementiasupport.org

Dementia UK have a free and confidential advice line where you can speak to a specialist Admiral Nurse who can help with all different kinds of dementia.

Tel: 0800 888 6678

www.dementiauk.org

Chorlton and Whalley Range Dementia Action Group

Email: ChWrDementiaActionGroup@gmail.com

Facebook: Chorlton and Whalley Range Dementia Action Group

More help on what you can do can be accessed here:

www.caregiver.org/resource/caregivers-guide-understanding-dementia-behaviors/

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