



Easing Anxiety

Feeling nervous or full of worry is a common feeling for people with dementia.

This often stems from two sources: fear of being abandoned or alone and/or the fear of what is to come. This happens when the person can no longer understand time concepts and has lost the ability to plan and carry out activities independently.

Anticipatory Anxiety

Concerns about:

- Becoming more reliant on others
- An upcoming event or situation
- Disease progression and the unknown future
- Institutionalization/placement

Separation Anxiety

Occurs when:

- The caregiver is out of sight
- Searching/calling for the caregiver
- Following or shadowing the caregiver everywhere
- The person fears being abandoned

Strategies:

Realize – You are becoming your person's memory, reality, support and navigator. Your person is close by because he/she cannot function independently without you.

Absorbing Emotions – Your person can start to take on or absorb the emotions of the people around him/her. If you are agitated, they will become agitated. Keep your emotions in check . Stay calm and provide reassurance.

Predictability – With so much uncertainty, structure and routine create comfort.

Don't Divulge – Before sharing news or information, consider how the person will handle it. If it will cause stress, wait until it is necessary and provide only limited details.

Engage – Keep your person involved in daily activities.

- Relaxation techniques– deep breaths, aromatherapy, music or adult coloring books
- Peer activities– visits with friends, adult day programs, & arts engagement programs
- Involve long-term memory (old photos, movies, or stories)
- Physical exercise can reduce pent up energy and stress– among other benefits!

Strategies not working?

Speak with your medical provider.