



Caregiver Advice

Create a safe environment

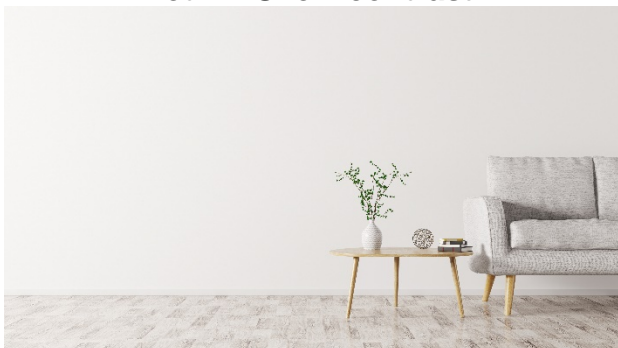
Folks with dementia are not agile with problem-solving, sometimes using good judgement and even cause and effect. To stay safer, check these items:

- **Prevent falls.** Avoid scatter rugs, extension cords and any clutter that could cause falls. Be sure there is good color contrast between items: floors & walls; toilets & walls; furniture & floors. Better color contrast means better clarity. Install contrasting handrails or grab bars in critical areas.

THIS high contrast between floor & wall:



Not THIS low contrast:



- **Use locks.** Install locks on cabinets that contain anything potentially dangerous, such as medicine, alcohol, guns, toxic cleaning substances, dangerous utensils, crafts, and tools. Best to get guns out of house.



Or something like this: Lots of choices.



- **Check water temperature.**

Lower the thermostat on the hot-water heater to prevent burns.



- **Take fire safety precautions seriously.** Keep matches and lighters out of reach. If the person with dementia smokes, always supervise smoking. Make sure a fire extinguisher is accessible and the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors have **fresh batteries** in place. There is no law about having several fire extinguishers – front door, back door, craft room, workshop, be safe!



Reduce frustrations

- Schedule wisely. Establish a daily routine. ... Remember science class and they talked about circadian rhythm? A regular time to rise and a regular time to sleep every day? That helps everyone get a good night's sleep and well rested. No naps!
- Take your time. Anticipate that tasks may take longer than they used to and schedule more time for them. ... Remember when you had to

take little kids anywhere? Remember how much you had to prep to go out including that diaper bag? Well, that is how you must think now, prepare, prepare, prepare and leave more time than you think you need. No stress on an outing is the best stress of all!

- Involve the person. ... Would you put this piece of bread on the sandwich?
- Provide choices. ... Do you want to wear the blue pants or the black ones?
- Provide simple instructions. ... Don't give five instructions, just give one. Yelling makes it worse.
- Limit napping. ... Very important if you want them to sleep well at night. Maybe it is time for some lively music and simple dancing or even a walk at their speediest pace.
- Reduce distractions – keep the table clean of distractions – move that pile of paperwork or any doodads to another room. That table decoration may have been there 15 years – it is time to pack it away, especially now when they are often reaching/playing with it instead of eating. It's time to bring out your inner minimalist decorator. And this is a good thing! Less to dust!

Till next week...

Be well.

If you have suggestions for upcoming newsletter topics, problems you are experiencing, please call or send me an email. I love challenges!

Give us a call or email and we will be glad to answer questions about the resources we have. **Please call** and ask at 410-742-0505, ext. 118 – Cindy Robinson **Or, email** Janet Parke at jparke@macinc.org

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