

# ADDRESSING ISSUES: A GUIDE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR CARE PARTNERS

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## TIPS FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICT

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**Stay Calm and Collected:** Approach conflicts calmly. Take deep breaths and remain focused on the issue, not the emotion.



**Listen Actively:** Listen to the other party's perspective. Validate their feelings and show empathy.



**Communicate Clearly:** Use clear and concise language to express your concerns. Avoid using accusatory language.



**Focus on Solutions:** Concentrate on finding a resolution rather than assigning blame.



**Be Persistent but Patient:** Persistence is key, but remember that resolving conflicts can take time.

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## TIPS FOR FILING A COMPLAINT

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**Understand the Formal Process:** Check if there is a formal complaints process and follow the appropriate steps.



**Prepare Thoroughly:** Gather all necessary information and prepare your questions and key points before making a call or writing a complaint.



**Identify the Right Authority:** Determine who has the power to address your concern—be it a supervisor, care home manager, or another authority figure.



**Humanize the Concern:** Explain how the issue impacts the person living with dementia and their care partners. Avoid blaming individuals.



**Practice Communication:** Practice what you need to say before making a call or writing a complaint. Ask someone to review your message for clarity and completeness.



**Include a Timeline:** Provide a timeline of key events, including your efforts to resolve the issue and the responses you have received.

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**Manage Expectations:** Be willing to compromise and focus on the most critical issues. Understand that change takes time.

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**Listen Actively:** Listen to the other party's perspective. Validate their feelings and show empathy.

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**Follow Up:** If you do not receive a response within the expected time frame, follow up to ensure your complaint is being addressed.

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## TIPS FOR WRITING A LETTER AND VERBALLY SHARING CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

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**State Who You Are and Your Purpose:** Begin by explaining who you are and why you are writing the letter.

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**Describe the Background:** Provide a brief background of the situation, explaining why it is a problem and how it affects you or the person you are caring for.

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**Suggest Next Steps:** Offer a practical next step towards solving the problem.

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**Set a Time Frame:** Indicate a reasonable time frame for action and follow up if you do not receive a response.

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**Copy Relevant Parties:** Copy the letter to appropriate people or agencies who can assist and keep a copy of your letter and any reply you get.

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## HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR LETTER

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**Determine the Right Recipient:** Identify who the letter should be addressed to, such as a department head, care home manager, or relevant authority.

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**Choose the Best Format:** Decide whether to submit the letter via email, mail, or in person. Email is often the quickest method.

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**Follow Up:** After sending the letter, follow up to confirm it was received and inquire about the next steps.

	IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE CONTACT	FOLLOW FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS
LONG TERM CARE	CARE HOME MANAGER OR DIRECTOR OF CARE	CHECK IF THE LTC FACILITY HAS A RESIDENT/FAMILY COMMITTEE
ACUTE CARE VITALITE AND HORIZON	CONTACT PATIENT CARE QUALITY OFFICE. IF URGENT, SPEAK TO SUPERVISOR OR MANAGER ON DUTY	<a href="#">HORIZON</a> <a href="#">VITALITÉ</a>
HOME CARE	CONTACT HOME CARE SERVICE PROVIDER	VARIES BY SERVICE
DEPT. OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	DEPARTMENT SUPERVISOR	1-833-733-7835 PRESS 6 FOR "ALL OTHER INQUIRIES" ASK TO SPEAK WITH A SUPERVISOR

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## ESCALATE THE ISSUE

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If you are not able to resolve your issue by following the complaint process, there are options to escalate the issue:

- Reach out to a licensing authority such as the [College of Physicians and Surgeons](#) of New Brunswick. You can find these authorities listed in your phone book or you can obtain their contact information through directory assistance or on their website. The establishment where the healthcare provider is employed can also guide you to the appropriate licensing authority to assist with filing a complaint.
- Contact a professional association, like the one representing the healthcare provider in question. Find their contact information on their website or in the phone book.
- The [Office of the Ombudsman](#) is an independent provincial entity that helps people with complaints regarding provincial departments or agencies, including hospitals.
- The [Seniors' Advocate](#) can support adults over the age of 65 with making complaints and ensure their rights are respected.
- If your complaint involves broader policy issues, systemic problems, or if you have not received a satisfactory response from other avenues, you can reach out to your [Member of Legislative Assembly \(MLA\)](#) or a relevant cabinet minister. They represent your concerns at the provincial level and can advocate on your behalf or escalate the issue within the government.
- The [Public Trustee](#) is responsible for safeguarding the financial and personal interests of vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, individuals with disabilities, children, and those who are missing or deceased, when no one else is available to do so.

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## ALTERNATIVE METHODS TO EXPRESS CONCERNS

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**Write a Letter:** People living with dementia can handwrite a letter or have someone assist them in writing it.



**Create an Audio Recording:** Record concerns and ask a nurse manager or another trusted individual to submit it.



**Share Your Story Publicly:** Post on social media or contact local media to help bring attention to your concerns.

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**REMEMBER: ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF OR SOMEONE WITH DEMENTIA IS ABOUT ENSURING YOUR VOICE IS HEARD AND YOUR NEEDS ARE MET. STAY INFORMED, ORGANIZED, AND PROACTIVE.**

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More useful resources:

[Patients' Rights – Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick](#)

If you have questions or want to learn more, please reach out to us!

Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick  
1-800-664-8411 | (506) 459-4280 | [info@alzheimer.nb.ca](mailto:info@alzheimer.nb.ca)  
[www.alzheimer.ca/nb/en/advocacy](http://www.alzheimer.ca/nb/en/advocacy)