

Managing Triggers: Learning how to Control Emotion **By: Denise Ansell, Client Support Coordinator**

When a person has dementia the ability to control emotions is affected. Often the individual will have a “knee jerk” reaction to those situations which cause stress or create agitation. This is because these situations cause the person with the memory problem to have difficulty understanding and perceiving.

The following are some common triggers and tips on how to deal with them;

Crowds and Loud Noises

- Remove one self from the crowds when triggered
- Visit malls, restaurants and other public places during less busy times
- Ask those you meet to move to a quieter spot for a conversation
- Keep the environment as quiet and calm as possible and give the person space
- Search out quiet spots that one might escape to if required

Being Rushed & Not Included in Plans

- Plan ahead
- Prepare a calendar or schedule to keep track of events
- Ensure plenty of time to get ready
- Get involved in the decision making process

Shopping Malls & Restaurants

- Make a list and show it to the staff at the store if needed
- Share with the staff that you have a memory problem
- Go to restaurants where you are familiar with the menu
- Ask to be seated in a quiet area

Difficulty Finding Words

- Allow time to pull thoughts together
- Tell others how you would like them to assist you
- Do not test or patronize the person, encourage them

Communicating With Others

- Participate in one to one conversations or small groups
- Ask others to slow down their speech
- Keep the conversation short and leave the conversation if needed
- Reduce distractions

Getting Lost or Losing Things

- Go on walks with others
- Organize your time and belongings
- Try to have a place for things and try to ensure you put them there
- Do only one thing at a time

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- Use labels on cupboards and closets

Change of Abilities

- Slow down and have realistic expectations
- Focus on one thing at a time
- Have patience with yourself
- Be comfortable asking for assistance
- Try not to sweat the small stuff

Stress, Frustration, Pain or Fatigue

- Avoid things and situations that trigger a negative response
- Remove yourself from stressful situations or decrease the triggers by controlling the environment
- Get plenty of rest
- Pet therapy has a calming effect
- Utilize relaxation techniques- music, exercise, deep breathing, etc.
- Share your feeling with others. It always helps to speak to a willing listener