



SAUNDERS HOUSE

MAIN LINE SENIOR CARE ALLIANCE

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150 YEARS!

A Healthy Tradition of Care and Wellness

Tips for Managing the Challenging Behaviors of Loved Ones with Memory Loss

In creating an overall coping strategy, it is important to assess your loved one's environment in order to eliminate or reduce these "triggers" and minimize the resulting problem behaviors. This will not only improve your loved one's quality of life, but yours as well.

To help caregivers, the Alzheimer's Association and other expert sources offer the following suggestions, which have proven useful in managing the difficult behaviors resulting from the progression of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

- **Anxiety/Agitation** – Try to create a calming, tranquil environment. Be patient and try to project an air of calm. Eliminate loud noises, and use soft relaxing music and ambient "white noise." Activities such as pet visits, art and music therapy and regular exercise such as daily walks have also proven effective in reducing the level of stress related behaviors.
- **Anger or Aggressive Behaviors** – It is suggested that you do not confront your loved one or try to discuss their angry behavior. The best advice is to allow them some time and space to "decompress." You can also try to distract them with a favorite activity or topic.
- **Wandering** – Wandering is a common behavior and may result from your loved one being hungry, thirsty or in some form of discomfort. Wandering can also be triggered by boredom, anxiety or a lack of exercise. It is best to address the cause or source, and to attempt to rechannel the wandering into a more appropriate activity.
- **General Emotional Distress** – Monitor your loved one's personal comfort. Check for pain, hunger, thirst, constipation, a full bladder, fatigue, infections and skin irritation. Maintain a comfortable room temperature.
- **Difficulty with Communications** – Try to be very simple and concise in your communications. To understand your loved one, you may have to interpret what they are feeling or attempting to express as their words may not be clear.
- **Evening Restlessness or "Sundowning"** – To control your loved one's increased agitation in the early evening hours, try to increase their physical activity during the day and monitor their napping schedule. It is also important to monitor and limit their use of products with caffeine and to keep their environment as calm and tranquil as possible in the evening.
- **Hallucinations and Suspicions** – It is not productive to argue with your loved one about what is real and what is imagined. Instead, try to focus on the emotions your loved one is feeling. Provide simple explanations for their accusations without being confrontational.
- **Sleep Issues** – Be aware that confusion and over-stimulation during the day can result in increased restlessness and insecurity at night. Try to encourage a regular, normal sleep routine for your loved one.



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- **Eating Problems** – Try to reduce any distractions when your loved one is eating. In addition, regular exercise is strongly encouraged to increase their appetite. Be sure to monitor their medications as some may interfere with their desire to eat.

Discover our Healthy Tradition of Care and Wellness

Located adjacent to Lankenau Hospital, **Saunders House** – [part of Main Line Senior Care Alliance](#) – has a celebrated tradition of providing [exceptional care and services](#) to seniors and their families. It's a tradition we're proud to continue.

Today, Saunders House offers a range of services including [short-term rehabilitation](#), [traditional nursing care](#), [restorative care](#), [memory care](#), [respite care](#) and specialized care for individuals with visual impairments – all in a setting that is warm, welcoming and nurturing.

For more information on **Saunders House**, our Short-Term Rehabilitation program and other professional services, please call us today at **(610) 658-5100** or [contact us](#) online.

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