



Responding to Challenging Behaviors and Recognizing Unmet Needs

When people feel trapped and terrified, they get agitated, anxious, and sometimes aggressive.

It's normal behavior for human beings to lash out when they feel threatened, whether they have dementia or not.

Unfortunately, many people who care for people living with dementia, including family, friends, healthcare personnel and caregivers, blame this normal behavior on the disease rather than finding and addressing the real underlying causes.

More often than not, something in the environment or in the way the person with dementia is being treated or approached prompts the aggressive behavior, which is in fact a perfectly normal response to something the person with dementia may perceive as a threat of some kind. Without knowing it, we can often become the very threat that causes or aggravates challenging behaviors.

10 Steps to Calming a Crisis:

Our job in caring for people with dementia is to:

1. Prevent crises from happening in the first place
2. De-escalate them if and when they occur despite our best efforts

Here are 10 ways anybody can use to calm a crisis in which a person with dementia becomes distressed and/or aggressive:

1. **Remove the threat**
2. **Create space**
3. **Get on her/his side**
4. **Get at or below eye level**
5. **Use "hand under hand"**
6. **Breathe in sync**
7. **Calm your voice**
8. **Relax your body**
9. **Attend to her/his needs**
10. **Be willing to go where he/she is**



Learn how to put the tips into practice by watching this five-minute video with [Teepa Snow](#):

<http://bit.ly/2a4E0iq>



What's behind the challenging behaviors?

10 unmet needs to look for



1. Fuel (hunger/thirst)
2. Energy (low/high)
3. Elimination
4. Discomfort
(physical/emotional)
5. Pain

1. Anger
2. Sadness
3. Loneliness
4. Fear
5. Boredom