

Produced by: *The Spiritual, Pastoral & Religious Care Office of
St. Michael's Centre
7451 Sussex Avenue
Burnaby B.C. V5J 5C2
Phone: 604 - 412 - 2195
The Rev'd. Randolph F. Bruce
Manager Spiritual, Pastoral & Religious Care*

Funded by: St. Michael's Centre Foundation
www.stmcfoundation.ca
Direct line: 604-244-1646



What Do I Do? – When A Loved One Is Confused or Disoriented

Whether someone's confusion is temporary – due to the effects of medicines – or chronic due to illness, here are several important guidelines to remember while coping with their disoriented state.

Don't argue, embarrass, or condescend.

This is the hardest thing to do as we find it hard to believe that the smart, funny, caring person we know and love is not in touch with their reality and how the world functions. This is hard on spouses and family members, who tend to get impatient with the confused person. Our reactions can have a not calming effect and can lead to the person becoming more nervous and agitated.

Try to respond respectfully to the questions and comments, even if the talk is disjointed or incomprehensible, and avoid asking questions that call for memory or logic.

Our loved one may change but **our love for them never changes and remains constant and they know if they are being treated differently.**

Don't expect loved ones to do tasks beyond their capacity.

Don't take it personally.

It's difficult to remember this simple rule, but it will save you lots of heartache. It is good to always remember that a loved one's short temper, forgetfulness, or odd behaviour is the result of their illness and not a lack of love.

Set routines, write reminders, and keep familiar things around.

When a move comes for your loved one, try to retain a few recognizable objects such as pictures and photographs that are placed in their new surroundings.

Go to the doctor with the confused person.

Loved ones with dementia or other related issues are often embarrassed and defensive about their condition and will forget or won't admit to the difficulties they are having. Go with them to seek medical help – and in some cases it might be proactive to meet with the medical personnel privately before the patient sees the doctor.

Above all, ask for help.

Because the relationships between loved ones and family caregivers are so tied up in emotions and memories, it is an extremely stressful undertaking to care for a confused and disoriented loved one. Don't hesitate to share the care with outsiders. On good days or not so good days, remember that you are blessed to have someone to love, and that your love is one thing that your loved one will never forget.

When the times comes for a move to a Care facility – take the time to visit your loved one, to touch them on the cheek, to hold their hand to tell them you love them – even if it means telling them over and over and over again who you are.

Self-care

Talk about your feelings. Express your angry or hurt feelings in a positive constructive way with a friend, a counsellor, or your religious leader.

Go for a walk, scrub the floor, paint a picture, journal, find a way to release the energy and not allow it to build like the steam in a pressure cooker.

Above all love yourself and know that deep down your loved one still loves you even if that love seems unrecognizable.

Bring Your Life into Balance.