

IS YOUR LOVED ONE EXPERIENCING SUNDOWNING?

If your loved one with dementia displays behaviour changes particularly in the evening time, it is wise to consider that it may not simply be a symptom of dementia. These behaviour changes may be agitation, aggression, confusion and restlessness. This is known as sundowning and often occurs in the moderate to severe stages of dementia.

Possible Causes of Sundowning

- Changes in the physical brain may affect the sleep cycle and cause wakefulness in the evening and at night.
- Your loved one may have previously been occupied and busy at a particular time of the day
- Little or disturbed sleep that may cause restlessness, or napping during the day time
- Side effects of medication that can cause confusion, agitation or wear off during the evening time
- Environments that cause discomfort may precipitate sundowning, eg shadows that occur around evening time

Tips for Caregivers

Sundowning may cause some distress to caregivers. Here are some tips which may be helpful in reducing Sundowning symptoms in your loved one.

1. Implement a daily schedule.
2. Occupy your loved one with a familiar activity that will bring them comfort, eg listening to favourite music, looking at old photographs
3. Reduce environmental discomforts such as loud noises and bright lights

Adapted from

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/symptomsand-diagnosis/symptoms/sundowning>

