

Dementia and COVID-19

What to do when someone is confused about where they are

- Some people with dementia may be confused about where they are and feel scared and distressed.
- Some people may not be able to understand the current situation and why they can't see relatives or friends.
- Some people may not be able to leave their room or leave their house and not understand what is happening.

What people may ask	What people may need	What can I do?
Mum	reassurance...love...warmth ... protection...nice food... "I'm scared"	Try not to be confrontational 'mum is dead' as this is likely to cause more distress. Try asking what their mum is like and help them feel safe.
Dad	protection...strength..."I'm scared"	Don't tell people 'dad isn't here'. Try asking what their dad does or what did they like to do together. Ask them if you can help them with anything.
Children	respect...loving...being loved...being needed ... purpose...joy...laughter	Reassure and reminisce, pass on messages, try and arrange a telephone call or a video call. Consider intergenerational opportunities like Hwb Heroes https://hwb.gov.wales/hwbheroes

What people may ask	What people may need	What can I do?
Home	safety...security...familiarity ... acceptance..."I don't know where I am"	Acknowledge how they might be feeling and orientate. "it's difficult being in hospital isn't it"... "there's no place like home but how can I make things comfortable while you are here?" Can you adjust the environment to make it feel more like home with familiar objects, photos etc.
Work	a sense of achievement ... responsibility...self esteem ... identity ...socialising... independence...purpose	Find something the person can do or contribute to, we all need a sense of purpose.
I want to go out	Routine	<p>Try and find a way of explaining the situation that they can relate to, such as a flu outbreak.</p> <p>Try and do an activity to keep the person occupied. It's important to establish a new routine during the outbreak.</p> <p>Consider some home based exercise – see health and wellbeing section for tips.</p>

Authors: Dr Natalie Elliott (National Consultant AHP Lead for Dementia) and Rebecca Cicero (Improvement Manager, Social Care Wales)