

Quick Guide: Determining the Cause of Your Parent's Anger

Dementia is a complex, progressive disease that impacts the cognitive functions necessary to communicate efficiently. If your parent expresses agitation or anger at you or others, it may be a reaction to an unmet need. When these behaviors arise, pause and reflect. Use your observation skills along with this chart to pinpoint causes.

P Physical	Is your parent hungry, thirsty, in pain, not feeling well or in need of a bath? Have they started or stopped any new medications? Always rule out pain first.
I Intellectual	Are they having trouble speaking, or having issues hearing, seeing or identifying objects and people? Do they believe they are in a different time or place? Are they hallucinating?
E Emotional	Are they experiencing depression or grief over a loss or major life change? Are they bored?
C Capabilities	Is your parent frustrated because they need help handling daily tasks such as eating, bathing or getting dressed?
E Environmental	Are changes in their surroundings triggering? Is the room too noisy? Might they find the temperature uncomfortable? Is it dark or cluttered?
S Social	Are they bored or isolated? Are they overwhelmed by too many people around them? Do they feel as if their care provider is moving too fast, ignoring them or showing impatience?

This chart is not exhaustive and should not be used as a substitute for professional evaluations, especially during aggressive behavior. Deciphering your parent's needs can take time and energy, so practice patience and don't take their actions personally. If you need additional help or support during your caregiving journey, reach out to our expert staff. We're here to help.