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## DEMENTIA CAREGIVER DOS AND DON'TS

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**Do** embrace their reality.

**Do** tell them, while you don't believe it's true, you will "look into it for them".

**Do** use redirection and distraction: These ideas mean that, when a person with dementia presents an untrue fact or belief, you redirect the conversation or change it entirely.

**Do** throw out the word "lying" and replace it with entering the truth of their reality.

**Do** share music. It is known to reduce anxiety and stress while increasing attention, motivation, and focus.

**Do** find a care partner who is person-centered, responsive, and recognizes the value of non-drug options.

**Do** include the person living with dementia. They feel more empowered, have less frustration, and their behaviors decrease.

**Do** take care of yourself as the care partner. People living with dementia respond to their care partner's stress with increased behaviors.

**Do** ask for help.

**Do** have a social life and be sure some of it is in real life.

**Do** take care of the legal and financial stuff soon to avoid issues later.

**Do** make sure to attend a support group.

**Do** be aware of underlying feelings and alert for triggers, infections, hidden injuries, and other discomforting situations.

**Do** take likes, dislikes, and needs into consideration.

**Do** recognize acting-out behavior as "stress-related communication," a call for help, and the start of a two-way conversation.

**Do** let go of old expectations and accept change.

**Do** say "yes" as long as you can do so safely, suspend your reality and accept theirs.

**Do** realize there are no mistakes. Just try again and relax.

**Do** laugh and smile as often as you can.

**Don't** try to assert your own reality on the person living with dementia.

**Don't** tell a person with dementia about a loss because it is unfair when they can't grieve it properly.