



## 5 Things to Say to Calm Dementia Related Anxiety

If your loved one is living with dementia, you may already have experience with the anxiety or worry that can accompany the disease. Not only are you worried about your loved one, the anxiety that your loved one may experience on a daily basis living in a confused state can be staggering. Perhaps you have seen physical signs of anxiety: hand wringing, pacing, wandering, searching for someone or something incessantly, crying, yelling or even hitting or striking at others. Dementia isn't always pretty, and interventions that work are as unique as the individuals themselves. However, the best way to be prepared when an anxious moment hits is to have many interventions to try and rely on. These five things to say can hopefully lead you and your loved one to a calming path.

### ***"You sound worried."***

The quintessential approach to calming people living with dementia is to validate their feelings first. You are likely unable to help with the anxiety that they are feeling, but you can validate what is happening with their feelings. Saying, "you sound worried" or "you look scared" can start the process of calming them down.

### ***"I'll sit here with you."***

The person living with dementia is living in an uncertain and ever changing reality. They truly believe that they are lost or that their husband is gone, and are reliving that experience multiple times throughout the day. Sometimes, reaffirming that you are here with them can not only make them feel better, but can also remind them that they are not alone.

### ***"Tell me about it."***

If your loved one is worried about a particular person or situation, invite them to sit down and tell you about that person or situation. This offers a chance for them to reminisce about their missing husband or their old home. Steer the conversation towards positive aspects – "your husband sounds like a sweetheart. How did you meet?" – and let your loved one share memories.



***“Would you like to have a cup of coffee?”***

After you have validated the feelings of your loved one, consider trying to distract her with a task that might take away her anxiety for a bit. Try sitting for a cup of coffee, taking a walk together outside, playing a game, or singing a song.

***“Can you help me?”***

You can steer your loved one’s anxious behavior into a way for her to feel useful and helpful by simply asking for her help. Ask for assistance making dinner (“no one makes meatloaf like you do, mom. How much onion do I add again?”) or a household task (“can you help me fold these towels?”), and work on the task together for as long as it will hold her attention.

Dementia is tough enough, but the anxiety and anxious behaviors can feel almost insurmountable without an arsenal of interventions at the ready. We would love to be one of the places that you turn to when you need assistance with your loved one. [Our Angels](#) are compassionate and caring, and have experience working with seniors who are living with memory issues.

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