

SLEEP ISSUES & SUNDOWNING

8 COPING STRATEGIES

1 MAKE A COMFORTABLE AND SAFE SLEEP ENVIRONMENT.

The person's sleeping area should be at a comfortable temperature. Provide nightlights and other ways to keep the person safe, such as appropriate door and window locks. Door sensors and motion detectors can be used to alert family members when a person is wandering, as can safety systems like Comfort Zone.



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PLAN MORE ACTIVE DAYS.

A person who rests most of the day is likely to be awake at night. Discourage afternoon napping and plan more challenging activities such as doctor appointments, trips and bathing in the morning or early afternoon. Encourage regular daily exercise, but no later than four hours before bedtime.

3 KEEP THE HOME WELL LIT IN THE EVENING.

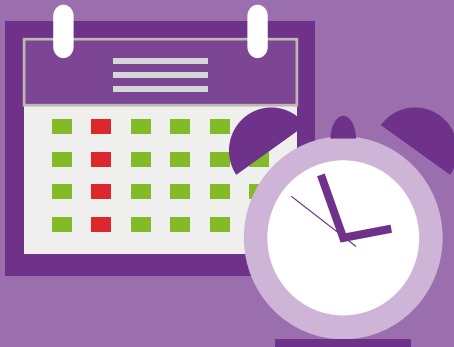
Adequate lighting may reduce the agitation that occurs when surroundings are dark or unfamiliar.



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4 MAINTAIN A SCHEDULE.

As much as possible, encourage the person with dementia to adhere to a regular routine of meals, waking up and going to bed. This will allow for more restful sleep at night.



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5 BE MINDFUL OF YOUR OWN MENTAL AND PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION.

If you are feeling stressed by the late afternoon, the person may pick up on it and become agitated or confused. Try to get plenty of rest at night so you have more energy during the day.



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6 AVOID STIMULANTS AND BIG DINNERS.

Avoid nicotine and alcohol, and restrict sweets and caffeine consumption to the morning hours. Have a large meal at lunch and keep the evening meal simple.



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7 TRY TO IDENTIFY TRIGGERS.

Limit environmental distractions particularly during the evening hours (TV, children arriving, chores, loud music, etc.).



8. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH OTHERS.

Join ALZConnected (alzconnected.org), our online support community and message boards, and share what response strategies have worked for you and get more ideas from other caregivers.



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