

# SHADOWING



Shadowing can leave the caregiver feeling smothered and their personal space feeling violated. Think of yourself as a security blanket for your person with dementia. They feel safe in your presence and insecure, anxious or fearful when they are not. You are familiar in a world that is becoming increasingly unfamiliar.

## CAUSES:

- Person with dementia feels anxious and fearful.

## SOLUTIONS:

- Establish and maintain a daily routine that brings structure to your person with dementia. A routine helps them to know what comes next and may reduce anxiety.
- Creating meaningful and involved activities. Such as folding laundry, setting the table, going on a walk, volunteering (with a friend or caregiver helping), working on a puzzle, organizing or sorting items, or planting a container garden, etc.
- Leave a written note to let your person with dementia know when you are leaving and what time you will return. Make sure your person with dementia has a clock that is easily readable.
- Try using a timer. When you need to have some alone time, like going to the bathroom, or running to the store, set the timer and tell her you will be back as soon as the timer dings.
- Use reassuring statements, such as “You are safe,” “I love you,” “Everything is OK” or “I am here for you,” and try writing them down for them to read or recording them for them to listen to over and over.
- Attend a local support group.
- Try scheduling your “private time” at the same time daily. If your loved one is really anxious about you leaving, introduce a friend or caregiver who can be there while you are gone. This may be hard at first, but typically will transition into a relationship she can count on and feel secure in.
- A snack can provide a nice break.
- Recruit help from family, friends or even hired help.
- Music can be very beneficial, make a playlist of their favorite songs and play them to provide stimulation and provide a familiar setting they can enjoy.
- Create a memory book, use familiar photos and items they can look at, hold and enjoy. Label each picture clearly with names and places.
- Refocus your persons with dementia on something that will make them concentrate.
- Play a video of a familiar movie or family video.
- Create your own audio recording.

Heerema, Esther, and Claudia Chaves. “Coping and Responding to Shadowing in Dementia.” Verywell Health, Verywellhealth, 20 Sept. 2018, [www.verywellhealth.com/shadowing-in-alzheimers-97620](http://www.verywellhealth.com/shadowing-in-alzheimers-97620).

Outreachnc. “10 Tips for Coping with Dementia Shadowing.” OutreachNC Magazine, 25 Apr. 2017, [outreachnc.com/10-tips-for-coping-with-dementia-shadowing/](http://outreachnc.com/10-tips-for-coping-with-dementia-shadowing/).

“Shadowing.” Fisher Center for Alzheimer’s Research Foundation, 21 Oct. 2014, [www.alzinfo.org/pym/feature/shadowing-2/](http://www.alzinfo.org/pym/feature/shadowing-2/).