



Apathy - Lack of Initiative

One of the early symptoms seen in people with dementia is apathy.

Signs of Apathy:

- No get up and go
- Socially withdraws
- Lack of interest in usual/favorite activities
- More likely to say 'no' to social invitations
- Appears to disregard the presence of family and friends

Apathy can be a symptom of depression or it can be a result of increased confusion. It can lead to feelings of hopelessness and frustration in both the person with dementia and their care partners.

Strategies:

Be practical

- Make eye contact and reduce distractions such as loud noise
- Avoid questions in which "no" is the automatic answer
- Give step by step instructions to show how the task should happen

Use creativity in activity

- Think exercise
- Utilize music
- Incorporate the senses
- Include children or animals
- Reminisce using old photos, mementos or stories from the past

Stay Positive

- People with dementia can sense the mood of those around them
- The more relaxed and positive you are, the better the person will feel
- Encourage the person to do what they can for themselves and only offer help as needed
- Use praise, encouragement and humor

Ask for help

- From family, friends or even professional caregivers for social activities in or out of the home
- From adult day programs which can provide alternative stimulation & activities
- From a support group of other caregivers who may offer ideas
- From your medical provider, if you think your person is depressed and may need treatment