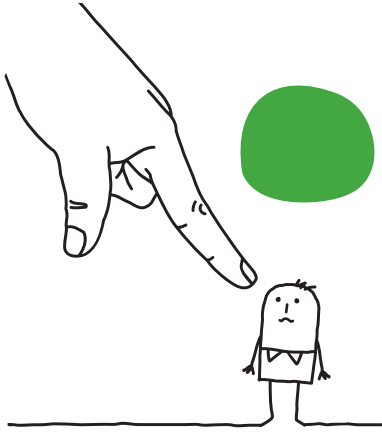


# Paranoia



## WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN?

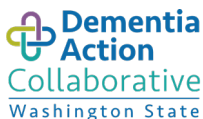
*People with Alzheimer's or dementia might:*

- lose an item and think it was stolen
- forget something told to them and when re-told, think it's a lie
- feel a spouse is treating them differently and believe it's because of an affair
- be unable to tell what is real and what is not



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[dshs.wa.gov/altsa/dementia-action-collaborative](https://dshs.wa.gov/altsa/dementia-action-collaborative)

People with Alzheimer's or dementia may become suspicious and frightened, even of those who love and care for them. Their world can seem strange and confusing, leading them to accuse others of stealing or lying. Don't take this personally; it is a common behavior.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### BE COMFORTING

- stay calm and use a gentle voice
- don't argue... the situation is very real to them
- let them know they are safe and everything is okay
- hold their hand or give a hug (if they don't mind being touched)

### TRY DISTRACTION

- offer a favorite food to eat or activity to do
- help look for missing items and talk with them about items you find along the way such as photos, objects around the house, books, etc.
- take them outside for a walk or to a different room
- talk about something important to them (family, music, hobbies)

### MAKE THE ENVIRONMENT CALM AND FAMILIAR

- keep extra items that are often lost like wallets, keys, jewelry
- keep their space quiet and calm
- surround them with things they remember and cherish
- turn off the TV or radio if a show or the news are upsetting
- re-introduce yourself and others as often as needed
- play music from the past that has good memories

### OTHER TIPS

- keep notes to describe the paranoia and share with the doctor
- have legal papers to show police the person's diagnosis, your relationship, power of attorney, etc.
- join a support group or find a friend where you can talk openly about your feelings and frustrations
- remember that sometimes items really do get stolen