



## **Elders and Aggression**

Much aggression that occurs in aged care homes is the result of environmental factors which include the actions or words of the staff and the interpretation of these behaviours by the person with dementia.

Here are some 'points to remember' when approaching someone who is agitated or aggressive:

- Act early to avoid an escalation of the aggression. If you think a problem may occur, act to prevent it or defuse it. Doing nothing often leads to more aggression.
- Ask yourself "What is this person making of the situation? And am I contributing to it in some way?"
- Try to keep the person safe and avoid harm yourself.
- Speak calmly in a low voice and slowly.
- Speak from the same height as the person who is angry.
- Use touch carefully to calm the person. Make your actions slow and deliberate so that they are not interpreted as threatening.
- Approach the person slowly and from the front (except when showering someone who may kick or hit out - approach from the side to avoid hands and feet).
- Anticipate that aggression may occur.
- Tell the person what you are going to do before you do it to give them time to understand what you have said.
- Avoid arguing or trying to reason with a person who is agitated. Arguing almost always increases the aggression. Back-off and avoid confrontation whenever possible.
- Avoid physical restraint wherever possible. Being restrained increases a person's sense of threat.
- Always get help if you feel you are in danger. Do not try to cope with the situation by yourself.

Remember you're part of a team.