

Psychological Symptoms

Behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia are a major part of living with dementia, regardless of the type of dementia. This set of symptoms are just as important as cognitive ones; they are also related to functional and cognitive impairment.

Affects up to 90% of people with dementia over the course of their journey

Can include: agitation, abnormal motor behaviour, anxiety, elation, irritability, depression, apathy, disinhibition, delusions, hallucinations, and sleep or appetite changes

These symptoms can be masked by dementia and present differently to typical expressions!



Usually expressed feelings of sadness might show as an inability to feel pleasure (anhedonia) in people with dementia

These might also present as motor or physical tension

While these are common across the dementias, not everyone with dementia will report these

Relevance to dementia

These symptoms are a major source of distress and poor quality of life in people with dementia and their carers. Correct identification and evaluation of these is crucial to a person-centred approach to care. It is important that both the person with dementia and those around them feel able to express their feelings. We should also keep in mind that strong emotions may be caused by unmet needs.