



*Rizzi Psychiatric  
Associates*

## THE RIZZI DIFFERENCE NEWSLETTER *∞* MARCH 2022

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### Sundowning and Sleep Disturbances

Sundowning is the term used for the behavior and personality changes many people with dementia experience in the late afternoon and evening. Symptoms may include increased agitation, confusion, agitation, pacing, wandering, and difficulty sleeping.

Though the exact cause for sundowning is not clear, we do know that changes in schedule, i.e. travel, visits outside of familiar environments (appointments, etc), having too many people around, an unsettled environment, lack of good lighting especially in the late afternoon and early evening, and stress all make sundowning and sleep disturbances worse.

Good news! There are some things we can do that may help alleviate some of the symptoms of sundowning and sleep disturbances:

- Make doctor's appointments in the morning.
- Keep a routine with regular waking and bedtime schedule.
- Make sure the person with sundowning gets plenty of natural sunlight at least daily – this can be achieved by simply visiting on the patio or porch outside.





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### More helpful suggestions:

- Do not try to restrain an agitated person...approach them from the front with soft words and a gentle demeanor.
- Keep the environment well lit and blinds open. Half open blinds create shadows in the room that may be disorienting.
- Limit daytime napping.
- Promote soothing activities in the evening and at bedtime: soft music, a happy movie before bed, etc.
- Avoid caffeine - give decaffeinated beverages.

The team at Rizzi Psychiatric Associates are experts in the care of patients with sundowning behaviors and sleep disturbances and are available to help manage the unique needs of these patients. Please, do not hesitate to contact us.

**We are honored to care for you!**



### **The Rizzi Psychiatric Team**

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