



Tuality Healthcare
Building a healthier community.
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info

mental health

Hallucinations

A hallucination is a false perception of objects or events involving the senses. When individuals with Alzheimer's disease have a hallucination, they see, hear, smell, taste or feel something that isn't there. The person may see the face of a former friend in a curtain or may hear people talking.

If the hallucination doesn't cause problems for you, the person or other family members, you may want to ignore it. However, if they happen continuously, consult a physician to determine if there is an underlying physical cause. Also, have the person's eyesight and hearing checked, and make sure the person wears his or her glasses and hearing aid on a regular basis.

Offer Reassurance

- Respond in a calm, supportive manner.
- A gentle tap on the shoulder may turn the person's attention toward you.
- Look for the feelings behind the hallucinations. You might want to say, "It sounds as if you're worried" or "I know this is frightening for you."
- Avoid arguing with the person about what he or she sees.

Use Distractions

- Suggest that you take a walk or sit in another room. Frightening hallucinations often subside in well-lit areas where other people are present.
- Try to turn the person's attention to music, conversation or activities you enjoy together.

Modify the Environment

- Check for noises that might be misinterpreted, such as noise from a television or an air conditioner. Look for lighting that casts shadows, reflections or distortions on the surfaces of floors, walls and furniture.
- Cover mirrors with a cloth or remove them if the person thinks that he or she is looking at a stranger.