

Easter may evoke mixed feelings, with a sense of loss for the way things used to be, and you may also feel pressure to keep up family traditions, despite the caring role taking its toll on your time and energy. Rethink family traditions and choose which are most important to you, always remembering you do not have to live up to previous expectations.

### **Tips to Help Ease the Pressure over Easter.**

- Mark Easter on the calendar and regularly discuss what may happen during this period, explaining how many days there are leading up to the holiday.
- Share photos that can arouse old memories and play or sing any traditional music that have been special for them.
- Consider holding Easter festivities in a familiar place to reduce anxiety.
- Understand the persons best time of day or plan visits around this time.
- Smell may be a powerful strategy for a person living with dementia (e.g. the smell of baking can stimulate memories) and may remain the longest as the dementia advances.
- If you are hosting a gathering, keep the invitation list small, and ask others to help with the food and cleaning up. Try to have someone prepared to share your caring responsibilities.
- Update family/friends on the persons status ahead of time so they know what to expect.
- Decorative displays and bright lighting can cause disorientation. Avoid lighted candles and other safety hazards, as well as decorations that could be mistaken for edible treats — such as artificial fruits.
- Sometimes family occasions may involve loud music and conversation, so try to maintain a calm and peaceful environment.
- Try to organise eating reasonably early in the day to avoid over-stimulation and over-tiring.
- If possible, avoid long periods of travel, and be mindful of any other health conditions that may impact the day e.g. arthritis may be uncomfortable after being seated for long periods.
- Ensure there is a quiet space for the person living with dementia to rest
- Try to maintain routines as much as possible.
- If the person becomes confused about family members (e.g. their son and their father, or their daughter with their sister), it's not necessary to correct them; however, it is important to continue the conversation and ensure they feel connected.
- Delegate, delegate, delegate, and let people help.
- Trust your own instincts and resist pressure to celebrate the way others may expect you to.
- Plan and set boundaries.
- Remember that even the best laid out plans can go astray, so make the most of each situation and use humour when appropriate to ease the pressure.