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If you're noticing changes and aren't sure what they mean, consider talking to a health professional.



**IS IT DEPRESSION,  
OR COULD IT BE  
APATHY?**

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**APATHY** and **DEPRESSION** can both occur in dementia. They are not the same but can look similar. **It is important to be able to tell them apart to ensure proper support.**

### What is **APATHY**?

It's a real, brain-based symptom different from sadness or depression. It often shows up as a lack of motivation or initiative, emotion, or interest in activities the person used to enjoy.

You might notice:

- The person **no longer wants to do things** they used to enjoy
- **Less emotional expression**- not smiling, laughing, or reacting as they once did
- **Quiet, short responses** like "I don't care" or "whatever," without signs of being upset
- Less feeling of **empathy**
- Overall, they do less, feel less, want less. Feeling of **indifference**

### What is **DEPRESSION**?

Depression is more than a passing low mood. It often involves strong feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or emotional pain that don't pass easily, or that stay for a long time.






You might notice:

- Expressions like **"I feel so sad," "I'm no help,"** or **"Nothing matters anymore"**
- Tearfulness or **emotional withdrawal** (pulling away from emotional connection)
- **Sleep or appetite changes** that are tied to how they're feeling

Understanding whether the person is experiencing **APATHY** or **DEPRESSION** can help you and their health team find the best support options. If the symptoms stay the same over time or consistently progress, consider raising it again with your health professional.

While **DEPRESSION** often responds well to antidepressants or talk therapy, **APATHY** may need different strategies like personalized routines, gentle prompting, and meaningful engagement.



	<b>APATHY</b>	<b>DEPRESSION</b>
 <b>EMOTIONS</b>	Reduced emotional reactions, but not necessarily sad (emotional flatness, less empathy)	Sadness, despair, or frequent expressions of feeling down
 <b>MOTIVATION</b>	Just not interested - may seem indifferent without being upset	"Why bother?" - low drive because of feeling low
 <b>INTEREST</b>	Lack of enthusiasm, even for favorite things - but without feeling sad	Loss of enjoyment linked to low mood
 <b>BEHAVIOUR</b>	Quiet, still, not initiating - often responds with "okay" or a shrug	Crying, expressing self-doubt, withdrawing
 <b>DAILY LIFE</b>	May skip meals or forget routines without noticing or reacting	Changes in eating and sleeping that are connected to mood