

some perspective on the situation and can help you realize that your older adult isn't doing this on purpose.

1. Impaired memory or judgement

- Forgets that they haven't changed clothes in a long time or thinks that they changed recently
- Is losing the ability to keep track of time
- Forgets that the clothes are dirty after taking them off
- Is no longer making good choices

2. Need for control

- Insists on independently making their own choices even if their judgement is impaired

3. Need for comfort and security

- Is comforted by the familiarity or routine of wearing the same clothing

4. Struggles with everyday tasks

- Is overwhelmed by the choices and steps needed to get dressed
- Has difficulty with the physical motions required to dress and undress
- Has body aches and pains or being easily fatigued makes changing clothes and/or doing laundry too difficult

5. Feeling overstimulated or uncomfortable

- Avoids clothing items that have distracting patterns or colors, difficult fasteners, or uncomfortable fit

6. Weakened or dulled senses

- Can't smell the odors caused by wearing soiled clothing
- Doesn't notice or see stains or dirt

Is it really necessary?

We've gotten used to changing our clothes every day and switching to pajamas for sleeping. But neither are strictly necessary for health or hygiene. If their clothing is not soiled, your older adult may not need to change every day. After all, many people regularly wear their shirts and pants a couple times before putting them in the laundry.

And if your older adult is clean enough and comfortable, there's no reason why they can't wear the same outfit during the day as well as for sleeping at night if that's what they prefer – especially if they're wearing comfortable loungewear.

Sometimes it's a matter of timing. Your older adult might be tired, cranky, or not feel like changing at that moment. Plus, if your older adult isn't leaving the house, they may not feel that the effort to change is needed – especially if dressing is tiring or physically difficult.

Before asking a reluctant person to change clothes, consider if it's really necessary or if it can wait until later or another day.

4 ways to get someone with dementia to change clothes

1. Avoid using logic and reason to convince them

- Avoid using logic or criticism, like saying "Dad, you've been wearing the same clothes all week and they're disgustingly dirty and smelly!" Hearing that would put anyone on the defensive. Plus, the logic and reason are likely to confuse someone with dementia – making them even more sensitive.
- Because of the damage that dementia has caused in their brain, they'll insist on believing their own thoughts and memory over yours, no matter what the facts are.