

A/Prof Leanne Humphreys, Director training and workforce development: Many people with dementia have experienced trauma. Some traumas happened a long time ago, some are more recent. People with dementia are also more likely to be abused by others.

Maria, Giuseppe's daughter: As dad's dementia has worsened, it's become harder for him to cope with his trauma.

He sometimes finds it difficult to tell me how he's feeling or what he needs. Sometimes he gets confused and doesn't even recognise me.

Angel, Personal Care Worker: I'm Angel. I am a Personal Care Worker. Once, I was helping Giuseppe shower.

All of a sudden he shouted 'no, no, no' and pushed me away. He started crying and holding his head in his hands and rocking back and forth. I thought I had hurt him. I didn't know what was wrong!

I learned that Giuseppe was sexually abused when he was a child. I wondered if being touched during his shower might have been scary.

Now I offer him choices, tell him what I'm doing and, where he can, I ask him to do things for himself like take his clothes off and hold the showerhead.

Maria, Giuseppe's daughter: When dad's upset I tell myself that he might be frightened, so I remind him of who I am, where he is, and that he's safe. I sit with him, and hold his hand and have a quiet talk. And when he's calmer, I ask him if he'd like to watch TV... or go out to the garden.

A/Prof. Leanne Humphreys: So remember, many people who have dementia have also experienced trauma. There are simple things you can do to help people feel safer, stronger and more in control. These things can help improve the quality of life of someone like Giuseppe.