



Fiblets and Therapeutic Lies

What is a Fiblet?

A fiblet is a white lie you tell someone with dementia to avoid stress and trauma to that person. These lies, or rather, therapeutic interventions, help you as the caregiver to meet the person with dementia in the reality in which they live. This helps to keep your loved one as stress-free as possible.

The best example of a fiblet is a lady named Maggie. She used to always ask me where her mother was. In her head, she was around 10 years old, lost, scared, and looking for her mom. I could have told her the truth, that she was 85 and her mom had been dead for some time, but can you imagine how she would react to that? This woman, who believes she is young and lost, would be even more afraid! Instead, I would tell her that her mother went to run some errands and she could wait with me until she came back. In that way, Maggie could relax knowing that someone was with her and not be worried about her mother.

The trick with fiblets is that they are vague and that they never cause harm to the person living with dementia.

Alternatives in Alzheimer's Care has a fantastic article that explains more about fiblets:

<https://alternativesinalzheimerscare.com/the-art-of-utilizing-a-fiblet/>

Example:

Emily has dementia and is living with her daughter (who she can't remember). She's in a strange place with strange people, in which she knows her husband of 25 years (who has been dead for some time) left her there! He is so angry she barges to the front door and demands to be taken to the courthouse to divorce her good-for-nothing husband! Do you tell her her husband is dead? No, he can't be dead because for Emily, she just saw him this morning. So we are going to tell her a fiblet. "Sorry, Emily, it's Saturday, the courthouse is closed." Emily doesn't know it's Tuesday, and the courthouse is open. In her mind now, it's Saturday, so she realizes she can sleep in, so she goes back to bed.