understanding and responding to dementia-related behavior

Objectives

By the end of today's program, you will be able to:
- Identify common triggers for behaviors associated with dementia.
- Explain the process for assessing and identifying challenging behaviors.
- List strategies to address common dementia-related behaviors.

Triggers

Behavioral changes have many triggers
- Pain or discomfort
- Over-stimulation or boredom
- Fear or frustration
- Unfamiliar surroundings
- Complicated tasks
Understanding and addressing the behavior

Detect and connect
- Join the person in his or her reality by trying to see the world through his or her eyes.
- Understand the person’s reality in context before intervening: Who? What? Where? When? How? What took place before, during and after the behavior took place?
- Approach the person calmly and respectfully.

Address Physical needs first
- Medical issues.
- Physical problems such as:
  - Hunger or thirst.
  - Lack of social interaction.
  - Environmental triggers for discomfort.
Then address emotional needs
• Focus on the person’s feelings, not facts
• Use your knowledge of the person’s preferences to provide effective interventions.
• Redirect the energy into a more soothing activity.

Understanding and addressing the behavior

Reassess and plan for next time
• Go back to detecting and connecting.
• Join the person’s reality.
• What went well and what didn’t?
• How can you make adjustments?

Rose’s mother had Alzheimer’s disease.
Apply these to any behavior

Detect and assess

Address physical needs first

Then address emotional needs

Reassure and plan for next time

Anxiety or agitation

Restlessness or pacing, distress, over-reliance on caregivers

Let’s keep Ann’s situation in mind as we review these steps…
Confusion or suspicion

Not recognizing familiar people, places or things; accusing others of theft, infidelity, etc.

Let's keep Ann’s situation in mind as we review these steps…

Aggression

Aggressive behavior may be verbal or physical. It may occur suddenly for no apparent reason, or may emerge following a trigger.
Let's keep Ann's situation in mind as we review these steps…

Rose’s mother had Alzheimer’s disease.

Aggression

- Usually, aggressive behaviors associated with dementia are upsetting but not dangerous.
- Occasionally the person is a danger to themselves or others and safety measures are necessary.
- Speak with the person’s doctor about medical interventions.
- Call 911 when help is urgently needed.
Repetition

Saying something over and over, repeating words, questions or behaviors.

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Let’s keep Ann’s situation in mind as we review these steps…
Wandering

60% of people with dementia will wander, and it can happen at any stage without warning.

Beverly’s husband, Amos, has Alzheimer’s disease.

Let’s keep Ann’s situation in mind as we review these steps…
Sandra’s mother is in the late stage of Alzheimer’s disease.