What Am I to Do?

Learning Skills to Manage Dementia-Related Behaviors
What You Will Learn

Importance of communication

Foundational skills for dementia behaviors

The role self-care plays in managing dementia behaviors
Dementia Review

Dementia is a general term meaning impairment in:

- Cognitive (Brain) Abilities
- Functional Abilities
- Emotional/Psychological Functioning
There are many causes of dementia

Alzheimer’s disease
Lewy bodies
Vascular
Frontotemporal
Korsakoff
Parkinson’s
Huntington’s
...and many more!
CANDLES Approach
CANDLES

Communication
Approach
Needs
Distraction
Leave for Later
Environment
Sensory Functioning

1) Foundational skills to consider when interacting with someone with dementia and behaviors
2) From here, more advanced or creative skills can be trialed
3) See additional resources for ideas for specific behaviors
Communication – General Strategies

- Face the person directly; Avoid or reduce distractions
- Don’t overdo it when speaking!
- Speak at a slower pace
- **Allow** time for the person to understand the information (10 seconds)
- Use a friendly tone, **even when frustrated**
- Use better ear / ensure hearing aids are in place and working
Language Changes
Unhelpful Practices

• Statements that add pressure
• Statements that correct the person
• Statements that discount the person’s experience
Communication

Early in the disease process

- Generally have a straightforward conversation
- Allow extra time for the person to find words and respond
- Don’t always be quick to jump in and name the word for them or perform a task (ask what their preference is)
- Focus on supporting memory
Communication

As the disease progresses (middle stage),
- Shorter sentences
- Simplify word use
- Direct and concrete in language
- Use fewer open-ended questions
- Use more open-closed questions / offer a few choices
- Incorporate non-verbal communication strategies (touch, gestures, visual)

Would you like _x_ or _x_?
Communication

Towards the end of the disease (late stage)
- Greatly simplify your language
- Be mindful of tone
- If asking to do something, use very few words
  - *Think: How can I say this in one to three words*
- Use more visual and tactile forms of communicating
- Have *pseudo* conversations to promote social interaction and quality of life
Dementia and Dignity

How do you express appreciation and respect?

◦ Love
◦ Thank you
◦ Praise
◦ Show interest
◦ That they are wanted and valued
Approach - General Strategies

- Approach from the front
- Go at a slower pace
- Be aware of your body language
- Announce your presence
- Inform your loved one of the steps you are taking (if performing a task)
- If possible, get down on their level
Needs

Persons living with dementia still have **physical, social, spiritual, and emotional** needs.

Consider the following,

- Is the behavior an attempt to express a need?
- Be proactive! You now their routine and preferences best
- Basic needs such as thirst, hunger, warmth, cool, toileting, pain relief, etc.
- Boredom and need for social stimulation
- The need to feel useful and productive. *How can they still participate?*
Distraction

You must first have their attention before you attempt distraction.

Offer a response aimed at their emotional experience (sad, frustrated, worried, etc.).

Discuss topics or interests known to be enjoyed by the person.

Use objects or pictures when possible to switch focus.
Leave for Later

Feeling or (actually being) rushed to complete your tasks can be felt by persons with dementia.

When a person resists an activity (such as bathing or dressing), it may be okay to leave that task for later.

Give it some time and try again later if it is not an urgent issue or a safety concern

Rethink your approach and communication used with your loved one
Be a dementia detective! Behaviors can occur due to the environment demanding too much from the person or “obnoxious” experiences. Take a moment and look all around!

*How can we make the environment more pleasing?*

Think about the following:
- Too noisy or not enough stimulation
- Too bright or dark
- Too warm or cold
- A new situation/change in routine
- An unknown person
Senses

Promote an optimal sensory experience:

- Is there enough light?
- Wearing hearing aids?
- Wearing their glasses?
Resources
This is Hard Work!

Whether professional, family, or friend, dementia-related behaviors can wear you down

How a caregiver views the behavior and how well they feel they can manage is linked to all kinds of outcomes
Resources for Behaviors

Dementia Organizations and Associations
◦ Alzheimer’s Association, Lewy Body Dementia Association, National Institute on Aging

Wyoming Center on Aging
◦ Dementia Care Certificate, Online Training Videos

Healthcare Providers / Treatment Team