

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

Understanding and Responding to Behavioral Symptoms of Dementia: A Guide for Direct Care Workers

This teaching package was developed through a grant from the SCAN Foundation. The content was developed by Linda Redford, R.N., Ph.D. in collaboration with Aging Services of California and the Institute for the Future of Aging Services of the American Association of Homes and Services for Aging. The staff of three nursing facilities in California graciously offered their time for focus groups to assist in shaping the content of these modules. These groups also participated in pilot tests of the curriculum and offered insights to make the curriculum most relevant to their needs.

INTRODUCTION

This Handbook contains information to supplement the presentations on Dementia. It contains notes pages for the presentation slides and additional readings and videos that you can access on the Internet. The Modules to be presented will provide you information on behavioral symptoms of dementia. These modules will help you to understand how dementia affects the brain, the behaviors that result from the damage to the brain, and how you can best care for residents who display various behavioral symptoms of dementia.

Module 1 provides you with an overview of normal memory changes with aging and the memory and behavior changes that are found in dementia. You will learn what dementia means, the types of dementia, and how the different types of dementia may result in unique behavioral symptoms.

Module 2 discusses the common behavioral symptoms of dementia and the factors that should be examined as potential triggers for various behaviors. You will learn about behavioral assessment and have the opportunity to work in teams to conduct a behavioral assessment on a resident and report your finding to the group for discussion.

Module 3 introduces strategies for addressing various behaviors. The approaches to effective interventions generally depend on the factor(s) that triggered or exacerbate the behavior. This module highlights the causes/triggers most commonly associated with particular behaviors and the strategies for addressing them.

You are encouraged to utilize the readings and watch the videos suggested before each slide presentation in this manual. These materials will reinforce the information from the presentations and further your knowledge and skills in caring for residents with dementia.

Power Point Module 2

Common Behaviors and Behavioral Triggers Associated with Dementia: What You Need to Know

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this activity, you will be able to:

- Identify at least four behavioral symptoms that may be present with dementia.
- Describe currently accepted ways of talking about behaviors displayed by residents with dementia.
- Identify at least two needs of a resident with dementia that can trigger behavioral symptoms.
- Discuss at least three common environmental triggers for agitated or aggressive behaviors in residents with dementia.
- Describe and apply the components of a behavioral assessment.

Content Outline:

- I) Current views on behavioral symptoms in dementia.
 - a. Evolution in understanding of behaviors.
 - b. How changes in our views of behaviors results in changes in our response.
- II) Common behaviors displayed by persons with dementia.
 - a. Wandering
 - b. Rummaging/Hoarding
 - c. Repetitive
 - d. Verbal
 - e. Physically aggressive
 - f. Inappropriate
- III) Conducting a behavioral assessment
 - a. General overview of behaviors
 - i. Usual behavioral patterns
 - ii. Characteristics of current behaviors
 - b. Assessment of specific behaviors
 - i. When started
 - ii. Frequency and consistency
 - iii. Associated events
 - iv. Strategies for intervention that work
- IV) Common triggers of behavioral symptoms in dementia.
 - a. Needs or problems of the person
 - i. Pain/discomfort
 - ii. Illness
 - iii. Medication
 - iv. Fatigue

- v. Sensory problems
- vi. Fear/Anxiety
- b. Environmental Triggers
 - i. New or unfamiliar setting
 - ii. Noise
 - iii. Large numbers of people
 - iv. Lighting changes
 - v. Staff changes

Online Resources for Additional Information:

Readings

Alzheimer's Association. Educational Materials.

http://www.alz.org/professionals_and_researchers_resources_for_your_patient_s.asp

Dementia Care Notes. Handling Challenging Behaviors.

<http://dementia-care-notes.in/caregivers/toolkit/behavior-challenges>

Videos

Video #1- "How to Identify Behavioral Triggers in Patients with Alzheimer's and Dementia" provides written and video materials about behavioral triggers in persons with dementia.

Power Point Module 2

Common Behaviors and Behavioral Triggers Associated with Dementia: What You Need to Know

Slide 1

**Understanding and Responding to
Behavioral Symptoms of Dementia:
A Guide for Direct Care Workers**

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Slide 2

Module 2

**Common Behaviors and Behavioral
Triggers Associated with Dementia:
What You Need to Know**

Slide 3

Objectives

- By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:
 - Identify at least four behavioral symptoms that may be present with dementia.
 - Describe currently accepted ways of talking about behaviors displayed by residents with dementia.
 - Identify at least two needs of a resident with dementia that can trigger behavioral symptoms.

Slide 4

Objectives

- Discuss at least three common environmental triggers for agitated or aggressive behaviors in residents with dementia.
- Describe and apply the components of a behavioral assessment.

Slide 5

In dementia, changes in the brain cause changes in how people communicate.

Slide 6

Neither the **person nor the behavior is the problem**– the **problem** is the need or feeling that the person is trying to communicate with the behavior.

Slide 7

Changing Language and Attitudes

- LABELS reflect ATTITUDES
- STOP language that blames the victim!
 - Do **NOT** use terms like “hitter”, “screamer”, “dementia resident”
 - Talk about the behavior (wandering, screaming..)
Use the term “residents with dementia”

Slide 8

Behavioral Symptoms of Dementia


Slide 9

They may display a lack of good judgment.




Slide 10

They can no longer understand how to change their behavior based on the response of others.



Slide 11

They are no longer able to interpret and communicate their feelings in the usual way.



Slide 12

People become more likely to do things that irritate, offend, or embarrass others.



Slide 13

Common Behaviors

- Wandering
 - Orbiting
 - Visiting
 - Shadowing
- Rummaging & Hoarding

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Common Behaviors

- Repetitive Behaviors
 - Repeating the same activity or motion over and over
 - Pacing
 - Fidgeting

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Common Behaviors

- Verbal Behaviors (Non-aggressive)
 - Repeating questions, comments
 - Babbling incoherently
 - Screaming
 - Moaning

Slide 16

COMMON BEHAVIORS

- Verbal Behaviors (Aggressive)
 - Cursing
 - Sexual or racial slurs
 - Name calling

Slide 17

Common Behaviors

- Physical Aggression
 - Hitting
 - Biting
 - Kicking
 - Pushing
 - Spitting

Slide 18

Common Behaviors

- Inappropriate Behaviors
 - Inappropriate touching
 - Sexually suggestive acts
 - Relieving self in public

Slide 19

Assessment is a critical step in understanding and responding to behaviors in persons with dementia.

Slide 20

Examine each behavior individually

Slide 21

Assessing the Behavior

- What was the resident like prior to development of dementia.
 - Personality- friendly, mild mannered, angry, abusive
 - Ways coped with problems- avoided, became anxious, depressed, angry
 - Past history of psychiatric illness

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Assessing the Behavior


- Is this a new behavior?
- Does the behavior pose danger for the resident or others?
- Whom is it really a problem for?
Resident? Staff? Family?
- *Look at each behavior as a separate challenge.*

Slide 23

Direct Care Workers--


- You are with the residents every day and know them well.
- You are in the best position to figure out what is triggering behavioral symptoms.
- You are the eyes and ears of the unit and the advocate for the resident.
- You are the detective.

Slide 24

You are the detective-- 

- When did the behavior start?
- How often does it occur?
- Is it continuous or does it just happen occasionally?
- Does it occur or is it worse at a particular time of the day?
- Is it associated with a particular activity?

Slide 25

You are the detective-- 

- Does the resident appear to be uncomfortable, fearful, anxious?
- What is going on in the surrounding environment when the behavior occurs?
- Have there been changes in routines or staff?
- Has it been possible to reduce or eliminate the behavior before?

Slide 26

ALWAYS BE LOOKING FOR
WHAT IS CAUSING OR
TRIGGERING THE
BEHAVIOR!


Slide 27

Triggers may be a clue to an appropriate intervention.

Slide 28

Pain

- Acute or chronic
- Physical or mental




Slide 29

Illness or injury



Slide 30


A change in medication or reaction to a current medication



Slide 31

Overlay of psychiatric illness



- Anxiety or depression



Slide 32

Unmet Needs

- Need to use bathroom
- Fatigue
- Hunger/thirst



Slide 33

Unmet Needs


- Need for human interaction/touch
- Need for stimulation
- Need for socialization



Slide 34

Fear and Confusion


- Hallucinations/delusions.
- Unable to understand what is happening around them.
- Medication




Slide 35

Sensory Impairments

- Sensory impairments

Vision 

Hearing 


Slide 36

Triggers may be changes or disruptions in the environment

Slide 37

Activities that invade privacy or cause pain...

- Bathing
- Dressing
- Grooming



Slide 38

Move to a new location



Slide 39

Loud or chaotic activities



Slide 40

A disruption in daily patterns



Slide 41

Changes in lighting associated with the time of day



Slide 42


Changes in staff

A photograph showing a caregiver in a blue uniform assisting an elderly person who is seated. The caregiver is leaning over the person, possibly helping them with a task or providing support.

Slide 43


REMEMBER--Behaviors are communication. They tell us--

- "Something is not right!"
- "This is a warning!"
- "Pay attention!"
- "Do something to help me!"

A yellow emoji with a wide-open mouth, holding a grey megaphone, symbolizing a warning or a call for attention.

Slide 44

QUESTIONS??

A simple black stick figure standing with its hand on its head, and a question mark floating above its head, representing a state of confusion or a question.
