

# **How CNA's Can Create an Optimal Environment for People with Dementia**

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## **What is a caregiver?**

- **The primary person in charge of care of a patient, usually a family member or a designated health care professional.**
- **A person who provides care to those who need supervision or assistance in illness or disability.**
- **A person who helps in identifying or preventing or treating illness or disability**
- **A person who provides direct care**
- **A person who is responsible for attending to the needs of a child or dependent adult**

**Care - In medicine and public health, a general term for the application of knowledge to the benefit of a community or individual.**

**Ideal caregivers step in and compensate for any deficits a patient has, so that the patient can focus on being successful in what they feel and are able to do.**

## 1<sup>st</sup> Know the Basics of Dementia

- Any type of dementia is a **BRAIN ILLNESS**
- **Memory Loss** – New information is lost first, childhood is lost last
- **Apraxia** – cannot figure out how to use objects
- **Agnosia** – cannot recognize items, people
- **Aphasia** – trouble speaking or understanding speech
- **Personality changes**
- **Impulse control decreases**
- **Misperceptions are common**
  - May be due to confusion
  - May be due to psychosis such as **Visual hallucinations, Auditory hallucinations, or Paranoia**
- **Disorganized thinking**      A → L ↘ G ↗ ▲ D
- **What is in their minds is as real to them as yours is to you**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Understand the meaning of behavior

- **A Specific, observable, measurable, tangible ACTION**
- **Is a reaction to something internal or external**
- **Is a response to everything the person is experiencing**
- **People who cannot verbalize *MUST* communicate their needs through behavior**
- **Distressed behavior is always an expressions of unresolved problems or needs**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Imagine the Emotion Underneath the Behavior**

- Fear
- Loneliness
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Unimportant

### **4<sup>th</sup> Influence Behavior**

- Ignore a behavior
- Offer an incentive, e.g. "Swallow your medicine & I'll then I can take you over to the craft project"
- Emphasize *any* part of the behavior that is positive (for example: A patient is crying because her mother is waiting and you say – "you must have a great mother. I think that is why you are such a nice person. Lets wait together and have some tea. "
- Find an incompatible behavior (for example: talking), to prevent the problem (for example: crying). "Tell me about your family while I help you wash up"

### **5<sup>th</sup> Monitor and Report any Hidden Medical Problems**

- Hearing, visual problems
- Ill-fitting dentures
- Contenance/ Incontinence
- Pain: Joint, back, etc.
- Reflux, Gas pains

## **6<sup>th</sup> Accommodate your Residents' Interests**

- **Music**
- **Activities**
- **Clothing**
- **Dolls/stuffed animals**
- **Bath or showers - morning or evening**
- **Food likes and dislikes**
- **Gardening**

## **7<sup>th</sup> Monitor and Improve the Environment**

- **Light should be bright without glare or shadows**
- **Avoid a lot of background noise**
- **Avoid silence except when sleeping**
- **Intervene with intrusive peers**
- **Avoid being intrusive yourself**
- **Minimize overhead paging**
- **Minimize distractions for patients or staff**
  - **TV, colors, objects, people**
- **Avoid crowding**
- **Use memory boxes**
- **There are many behavioral approaches to improve a distressed patients quality of life**
- **Stop the craziness of change of shift**
- **Keep family calm or refer to charge nurse**

## **10<sup>th</sup> Remember: You Can Improve Your Residents Lives**

- **Think of yourself as the front line care manager**
- **Know your residents inside and out**
- **Anticipate rather than react**
- **Work as a team to care for your residents**
- **Ask for family involvement for activities or ideas**
- **Be clear in your communication, learn to use very specific words when describing a situation**
- **Never disregard a distressed behavior**

**Never, ever forget that taking good care of anyone requires that you first nurture you own self.**

**This is important.**

**For those residents with dementia, you are a lifeline into joy and self esteem.**

**What you contribute is vital.**

# **Better Descriptors of Behavior than the Word "Agitation"**

<b>Physical</b>	<b>Verbal</b>	<b>Passive</b>
<b>Hitting</b>	<b>Threats</b>	<b>Silence</b>
<b>Pacing</b>	<b>Accusations</b>	<b>Poor po intake</b>
<b>Kicking</b>	<b>Name-calling</b>	<b>Withdrawal</b>
<b>Biting</b>	<b>Obscenities</b>	<b>Dead weight</b>
<b>Pushing</b>	<b>Complaining</b>	<b>Listless</b>
<b>Spitting</b>	<b>Attention-seeking</b>	<b>Hand wringing</b>
<b>Scratching</b>	<b>Screaming</b>	<b>Blank stare</b>