

understanding and responding to dementia-related behavior



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**



**Address physical
needs first**



**Then address
emotional needs**



**Reassess and plan
for next time**

Understanding and addressing the behavior

Detect and connect

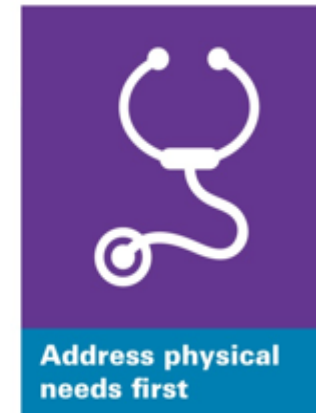
- Join the person in his or her reality by trying to see the world through his or her eyes.
- Understand the person's reality in context before intervening: Who? What? Where? When? How? What took place before, during and after the behavior took place?
- Approach the person calmly and respectfully.



Understanding and addressing the behavior

Address Physical needs first

- Medical issues.
- Physical problems such as:
 - Hunger or thirst.
 - Lack of social interaction.
- Environmental triggers for discomfort.



Understanding and addressing the behavior

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?



Anxiety or agitation

Restlessness or pacing, distress, over-reliance on caregivers



Understanding and addressing the behavior



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Aggression

Aggressive behavior may be verbal or physical. It may occur suddenly for no apparent reason, or may emerge following a trigger.



Understanding and addressing the behavior



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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.

Wandering

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



Understanding and addressing the behavior



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Communication in the middle stage

To connect, respond empathically and reassure

- Join the person's reality.
- Provide reassurance that you hear and understand.
- Focus on the feelings, not the facts.
- Validate and redirect the person if necessary.

Communication in all stages of the disease

- Join the person's reality to connect.
- Understand and accept what you can and cannot change.
- Remember that the person retains a sense of self despite the losses of the disease.
- Demonstrate respect and connect through feelings.
- Always treat the person as the adult he or she is.
- Try to decode the person's communications.
- Recognize the effects of your mood and actions.
- Try to understand the source of reactions.
- Help meet the needs while soothing and calming the person.

Questions?

Alzheimer's Association

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24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900

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