

Care Partner Information

Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia Caregiving Tips

Dealing with Dementia Behaviors

It is common for people with dementia to have behavior problems such as being angry a lot, pacing or even completely withdrawing from friends and family. Many times these behaviors are not intentional, but instead are the result of what is happening in the brain because of dementia. You cannot always prevent these behaviors. However, if you can understand why they happen you can often change how you respond to make things better for you and them.

Common Behavior Problems in Dementia	
Awake and active at night when everyone else is sleeping	Loss of interest, caring or motivation - may seem withdrawn and uncaring
Thinking people are stealing	Acting out sexually
Getting upset	Hiding things
Repeating the same things over	Rummaging
Hitting, kicking, or biting	Seeing things that aren't there
Pacing	Doing inappropriate things
Not understanding what is said	Wandering

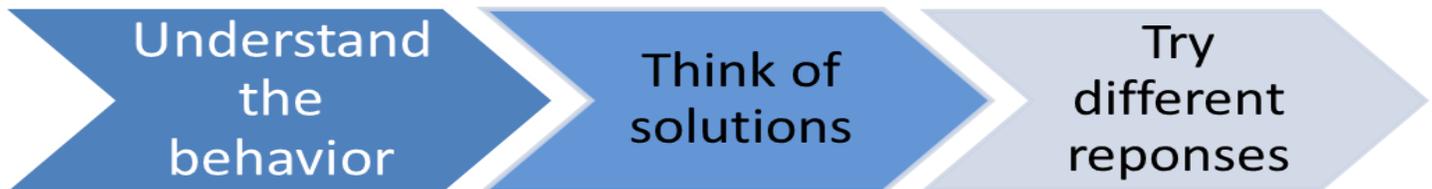
Sometimes problem behaviors are caused by things that can be easily fixed, such as if there is too much noise or activity. Problem behaviors can also happen if the person feels rushed or hurried to do a task. People with dementia can get frustrated very easily, and it is difficult for

This Care Partner Information page is part of a series on caregiving tips. They are written to help family and community caregivers, direct care workers and community health representatives care for someone with Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia. Available in English and Spanish at www.aging.arizona.edu

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The 3-Step Approach

Sometimes you can prevent behaviors from happening. Other times you can learn how to deal with them when they occur. The 3-step approach tries to figure out why the behaviors are happening so you can respond in a way that helps.



Step 1 – Understand the behavior: What was the behavior? What was happening before the behavior happened? What happened right after the behavior?

Step 2 – Think of solutions: Can you change the situation? Can you change your response? Did the person need something?

Step 3 – Try different responses: Did doing things differently help? What are some other solutions to the problems? Did you reach out for help?

Remember, behaviors can happen for any reason at any time. Learning how to predict and respond to them is important, but taking good care of yourself can also help. When you are feeling good and getting support from others, it will be easier to deal with problem behaviors when they occur. Find a local support group, seek help from professionals, and talk with your providers about what is happening. Here are some tips for managing problem behaviors.

Quick Tips for Dealing with Problem Behaviors

- Stay calm and be patient.
- Never argue or try to reason. It won't work.
- Acknowledge their feelings, reassure them and help them not to feel pressured.
- Keep a regular schedule and stick to it.
- Redirect with things like music, pictures or changing the subject.
- Don't take it personally. It's not your fault. It's the dementia's fault.
- Get help and talk with others.

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