

DEMENTIA CAREGIVING 101

A GUIDE TO CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DISORDERS



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Session 2

Communication and Behaviors

Objectives

- Discover how a person with Alzheimer's disease behaves and how to address them
- Learn to effectively communicate to and with a person with Alzheimer's disease or related disorders



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Consider the following scenarios

- If we can have hamburger tonight, I won't have to go to the store till the weekend.
- I'll leave your lunch in the Tupperware in the fridge; eat at noon.
- Take the medicine three times a day for the next 10 days

Instead say or do:

- We're having hamburger tonight.
- Leave written note about lunch /
- Set up the meds and reminders



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COGNITIVE LOSSES

Memory

- Early loss of recent memories
- Long-term memories last longer
- Eventually all memories fade
- Don't expect new learning

Language

- Difficulty finding words
- Frustration with word finding difficulties

Reasoning

- Breakdown of connection between thoughts, objects, and events
- Unable to reason with
- Can't bargain or negotiate

Judgment

- Making poor choices
- Safety concerns
- Impulsivity
- Insensitivity to others

Source: Savvy Caregiver Program



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COGNITIVE LOSSES

Perception

- Misperception- can't interpret sensory input (ex of the bush)
- Suspicious and paranoid (lady thinking neighbor stole her milk
 - Can get overwhelmed

Abstraction

- Loss of time, distance, relationships
- Unable to think hypothetically
- Caregiver needs to give more concrete directions

Attention

- Harder to stay on track
- Easier to lose focus or become distracted
- Must remove distractions to stay on task

Organization

- Unable to use a plan
- More directions and steps, the harder the task
 - Requires support and prompting

Source: Savvy Caregiver Program



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COMMUNICATION



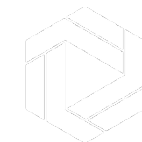
Everyone is different

The “reality” of the person with dementia is different from your reality



The person is not trying to be difficult

Show that you are listening and understand what is being said



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COMMUNICATION



Focus on what the person **CAN** do; use distraction

Assume the person understands everything you say



Be patient

Let it go

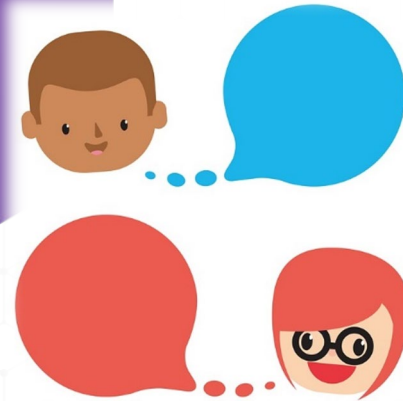


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EFFECTIVE VERBAL COMMUN

1. Address the person by name and identify yourself
2. Speak slowly and clearly, communicating one message at a time
 - a. Break down into simple steps
 - b. Give the person enough time to respond
 - c. If you have to repeat something use the same words
 - d. Be prepared to give the information more than once
3. K.I.S.S
 - a. Emphasize key words.
 - b. Don't use words they may not know
3. Watch your tone of voice
 - a. It's not what you say; it's how you say it
 - b. The person may not understand the words or feelings behind it
 - c. Your attitude is reflected in



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EFFECTIVE VERBAL COMMUN

- ❖ Use your whole body to communicate
- ❖ Get your loved one's attention
- ❖ State your message clearly. Repeat self and re-phrase if necessary
- ❖ Ask simple, answerable questions. Ex: "Would you like a sandwich?" Better yet, hold up a peanut butter jar and a slice of bread
- ❖ "Listen" patiently with your eyes

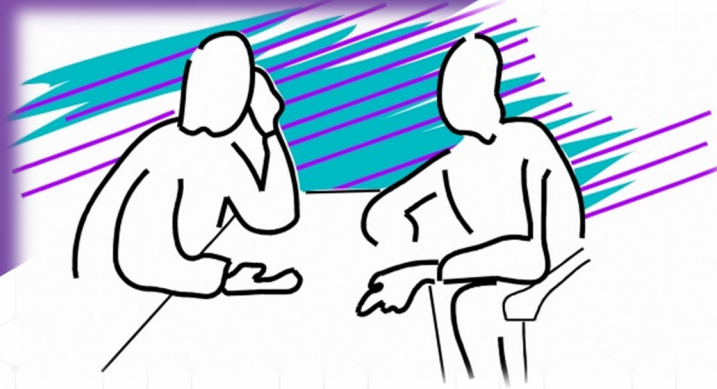


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EFFECTIVE VERBAL COMMUN

- ❖ Break down activities into a series of steps
- ❖ Use distraction and redirection. “I see you’re upset and I’ll take you for a walk”
- ❖ Respond with affection and reassurance but do not try to correct what is wrong
- ❖ Remember the good old days
- ❖ Maintain your sense of humor

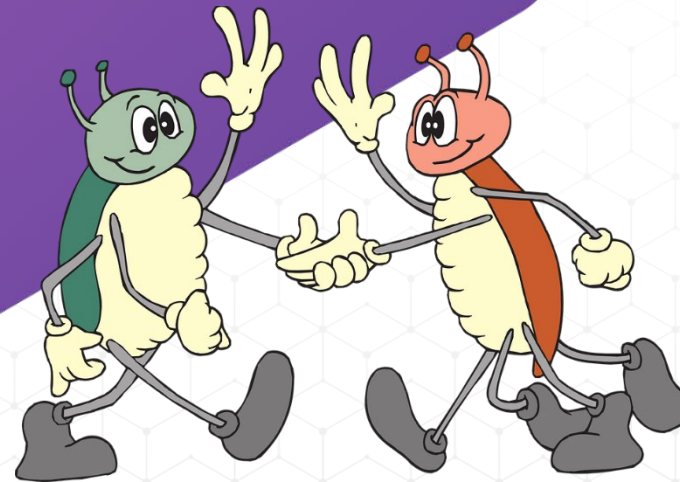


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EFFECTIVE NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION

1. Approach slowly and from the front
 - a. If you've ever been startled from behind, you can understand how someone might feel.
 - b. Use physical touch to calm the individual and to keep her attention; hugging is best.
 - c. Eliminate background noises as much as possible.
2. Body language
 - a. Be calm and supportive
 - b. Maintain a relaxed posture
 - c. Be aware of facial expressions
 - d. Go slow; do not rush



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BEHAVIORS



- Aggressive behaviors: May include yelling, name calling, pushing, biting etc. They can happen suddenly and you may not know
 - Try to identify the cause; think about what may have triggered the behavior
 - Do not think about the act; think about how the person is feeling
 - Don't get angry and upset. Be positive and re-engage
 - Shift the focus to another activity. The impulse may have been unintentionally caused the response
 - Walk away if safe to do so
 - Develop an emergency plan



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BEHAVIORS

- Suspicious thoughts: They may see things differently after the person became ill. The person may be suspicious around him/her and accuse them of theft, cheating, or other improper acts.
 - Listen to what is bothering the person. Show empathy.
 - Don't argue
 - Switch the attention to another activity.
 - Replace lost items. For example, help them find their keys.



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BEHAVIORS

- Hallucinations and delusions: Hallucinations are when a person hears or sees things that are not there. Delusions are when the person holds and acts upon even though it is not true.
 - Do not argue; the feelings are very real to the person.
 - Comfort and reassure when the hallucination or delusion occurs.
 - Ensure the person has good glasses and hearing aids.
 - Reduce clutter and shadows in the room



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BEHAVIORS

Sundowning:

The person wanders, paces, or becomes agitated. Often happens in the evening and night.

- Plan the day so there is less to do late in the afternoon
- Play quiet music
- Make sure the person has had rest through the day to be tired



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BEHAVIORS

- Restlessness, wandering, or pacing: This may be caused by low energy, wanting to use up energy, or feeling uneasy
 - Make the home safe by making a clear path
 - Give the person something to do or something to focus on
 - Put away items such as car keys or other items that could be used to leave the home
 - Sign up for a 24-hour, nationwide emergency response service



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BEHAVIORS

- Anxious or agitated: May want attention and direction
 - Listen to the person's frustration. Find out what may be bothering them
 - Reassure by using calming words and letting the person know you are there for them
 - Distract the person
 - Find ways the person could use up some energy
 - Modify the environment, decrease stimulation



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BEHAVIORS

- Difficulty with recognition: at times, people may not know familiar things
 - Provide corrections as a suggestion without scolding
 - Stay calm, have patience and understanding



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BEHAVIORS

- Social or sexual inappropriateness: these may happen as the person progresses and they forget what privacy and modesty means.
 - Ignore the way the person acts if it is harmless.
 - Do not scold the person
 - Distract the person
 - Be prepared. Think ahead of time what you will do if the person begins to make inappropriate comments or sexual advances.



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BEHAVIORS

- Depression: May result from medications, sadness at the inability to function, physical illness, or a change related to the disease
 - It is important to treat the depression
 - Give the person something to do or something to focus on
 - Put away items such as car keys or other items that may prevent the person from leaving the home



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BEHAVIORS

- Apathy: Loss of interest in self, people, or doing things
 - Keep trying different things until you find one that the person enjoys
 - Remember, interests might change
 - Ask the person to help you with simple tasks
 - Allow the person to express sadness



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BEHAVIORS

- Confusion: May not recognize familiar people, places or objects
 - Respond with a brief explanation
 - Show photos and other reminders
 - Offer corrections as suggestions like “I think this is a fork”.



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Other Causes of Challenging Behaviors

1. Side effects from medications
2. Impaired vision or hearing
3. Acute illness (UTI, pneumonia, etc)
4. Chronic illness (CHF, diabetes, etc)
5. Dehydration
6. Constipation
7. Depression
8. Fatigue
9. Physical discomfort



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Other Causes of Challenging Behaviors

- 10. Environment too large
- 11. Too much clutter
- 12. Excessive stimulation
- 13. No orientation information or cues
- 14. Visual spatial skills
- 15. Poor sensory environment
- 16. Unstructured environment
- 17. Unfamiliar environment



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The 11 W's



- Who actually has the challenging behavior (person or caregiver)?
- What is the specific problem/behavior?
- Why does it need to be addressed (who is it bothering)?
- What happens just before the behavior (triggers)?
- Where does the behavior occur (environment)?
- What does the behavior mean?



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The 11 W's



- When does the behavior occur (morning/evening, bath time)?
- What is the time, frequency and pattern of behavior?
- Who is around when the behavior occurs?
- What is the outcome of the behavior?
- What is the desired change or outcome of the behavior?



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Effective techniques for managing the behavior

- ✓ Establish a rapport with the person before trying to assist with ADL's or other tasks; even if you think they should know you
- ✓ Divert or distract
- ✓ Remove
- ✓ Redirect
- ✓ Breakdown tasks
- ✓ Don't rush the person or act like you're in a hurry
- ✓ Do not over stimulate



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Effective techniques for managing the behavior

- ✓ Manipulate the environment
- ✓ Reassure
- ✓ Set limits
- ✓ Respect their privacy and level of modesty
- ✓ Do not keep the individual waiting
- ✓ Establish a routine and try to stick with it



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