

Understanding the Distressing Behaviors of Dementia

ALL BEHAVIORS ARE A FORM OF COMMUNICATION!

PHYSICAL FACTORS

- ◆ medication side effects
- ◆ discomfort
- ◆ infection
- ◆ pain



EMOTIONAL FACTORS

- ◆ over/under stimulation
- ◆ frustration
- ◆ depression
- ◆ boredom
- ◆ anger
- ◆ fear

PHRASES TO REMEMBER

- ◆ "I'm sorry"
- ◆ "Tell me about it"
- ◆ "Show me"



ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- ◆ unfamiliar environment
- ◆ unfamiliar people
- ◆ lighting
- ◆ noise
- ◆ temperature



COGNITIVE FACTORS

- ◆ declining status
- ◆ unable to communicate needs



Communicating with People with Dementia

COMMON CHALLENGES

WORD FINDING: knowing what the word is and not being able to remember it

DELAY IN RESPONDING: needing more time to process incoming information before being able to respond

WORD SALAD: stringing words together that have no meaning

REPEATING WORDS OR PHRASES: getting stuck and repeating the same thing over and over

TOPIC INSISTENCE: repetition of a topic

LANGUAGE SKILLS CAN VARY WITH EACH PERSON WHO HAS DEMENTIA

HELPFUL TIPS

MAKE EYE CONTACT: try to be at their level so they can focus on you

SHOW RESPECT: identify yourself to them

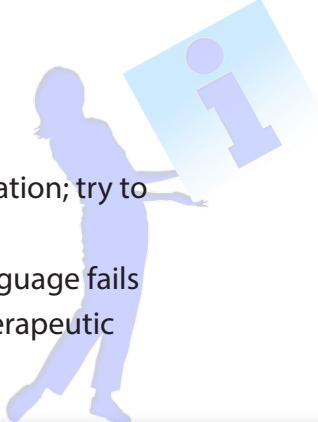
TOUCH: a hand on their arm gets attention or conveys interest

ALLOW RESPONSE TIME: don't rush or answer for them

OBSERVE BODY LANGUAGE: even distressing behaviors are a type of communication; try to determine what the person needs

LOOK FOR EMOTIONS BEHIND WORDS: emotions remain intact even when language fails

BE SENSITIVE ABOUT TELLING BAD NEWS: choose carefully if the truth or a therapeutic fib is the most respectful for the person



**AS PEOPLE LOSES THE ABILITY TO USE NOUNS AND WORDS EFFECTIVELY,
THEY BECOME MORE AWARE OF OTHERS' FEELINGS AND MOODS.**



GENERAL REMINDERS

Reduce distractions

Use short sentences that include only one thought

Repeat information as needed

Never argue or confront

Do not use open-ended questions

Remain calm

Be patient with yourself