

Long Term Care
Intensive Train the Trainer Series

Managing Difficult Behaviors

The Environment

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Teaching Cues	Content	Resources
<p>Title</p> <p>The environment affects the behavior of a person with dementia.</p>	<p>The Environment</p> <p>Module Overview: People with dementia depend on a predictable environment to function at their best. When the environment has confusing cues or distractions, challenging situations can occur. This module will explore some of the factors related to the environment that contribute to challenging situations. We will look at some possible causes for wandering and sleeplessness, and how our approach can affect the situation. We will examine activities and their role in providing stimulation in the environment.</p>	<p>Slide 1</p>
<p>Objectives</p>	<p>The objectives for this module are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify elements in the environment that may contribute to challenging behaviors 2. Recognize triggers for wandering and strategies for assisting the person with dementia. 3. Describe factors related to sleeplessness 4. Discuss the purpose of activities. 5. Identify key elements of successful activities. 	<p>Objectives</p>
<p>Introductory Comments</p>	<p>In any care setting, the environment plays an important role for the person with dementia. Many times we cannot change the environment, but it is helpful for us to be aware of how it is affecting the person with dementia.</p>	
<p>The Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The person depends more on the environment for cues as the dementia progresses. As the person’s ability to process information becomes more impaired, the person depends on the environment more and more to give them clues about what is happening. ▪ This may be affected by vision and hearing loss seen with normal aging. ▪ When people with dementia become confused, energy is drained as they 	<p>The environment</p>

	<p>try to figure out what is happening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The brain changes that happen with dementia can affect how the environment looks. ▪ The person with dementia may not recognize where they are, even if they have lived in their home for 20 years. ▪ Large rooms may be overwhelming is the person has visual spatial challenges. 	
<p>Environmental Factors</p>	<p>Environmental factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The amount of light in the room is important. The glare from shiny floors, open windows or bright lights can be disorienting. When there is not enough light, shadows may be interpreted as something threatening. ▪ Shadows and glare can impair a person’s ability to figure out what is going on in their environment. It can contribute to anxiety and agitation. It is helpful to remember that older adults need at least three times more light than a teenager does to read. ▪ There may be too much clutter in the environment. When providing care, or doing an activity, only the objects needed should be visible. ▪ A person may be affected by too much noise or stimulation in the environment. Loud voices or too many people can increase agitation. When care providers leave the TV or radio on in the background, it can offer confusing cues for the person with dementia. ▪ Sometimes there is not enough stimulation in the environment. The person with dementia lacks cues and information about what is going and become bored or anxious 	
<p>Discussion Question (5 minutes)</p>	<p>What things in the environment do you find soothing or distracting? (Examples of soothing things: soft music, waterfall Examples of distracting things: very bright lights, loud noises</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wandering</p>	

Wandering	<p>When a person with dementia wanders, it can lead to challenging situations. The Webster’s Dictionary defines wanderings “aimless going about.” For our purposes, we can think of wandering as movement through a large space by a person with dementia.</p> <p>It may appear purposeless to us, but the person with dementia is expressing an unmet need.</p>	Wandering
Why do people wander?	<p>We don’t always know why people wander.</p> <p>It can be spatial disorientation associated with the brain changes.</p> <p>The person may have a movement disorder.</p> <p>The natural 24-hour body rhythm may be disrupted.</p> <p>It may be pain or hunger, or the need to use the bathroom.</p> <p>The side effects of some medications may contribute to wandering.</p> <p>The person may need exercise.</p>	Why do people wander?
A person with dementia writes about wandering	<p>In the book, <i>My Journey Into Alzheimer’s Disease</i>, Robert Davis kept a journal about his experience. His journal gives us insight into the feelings of a person with dementia. He tells us that wandering around and restlessness is one of the by products of Alzheimer’s Disease. He writes, “When the darkness and emptiness fill my mind, it is totally terrifying. I cannot think my way out of it. It stays there, and sometimes images stay stuck in my mind. Thoughts increasingly haunt me. The only way I can break this cycle is to move.”</p>	
Discussion question (5 minutes)	<p>What would you do if you felt this way?</p>	
Risk factors	<p>Some of the risk factors of wandering include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced dementia Good mobility Few chronic illnesses 	Risk factors

	<p>Impaired communication skills</p> <p>History of being social and enjoying being around other people.</p> <p>Wandering can take a physical toll on people with dementia. The person may become dehydrated.</p> <p>There may be weight loss because of increased activity.</p> <p>A person may not be able to sit down for a meal and be at risk for poor nutrition.</p> <p>They may not be able to get adequate sleep, and become fatigued easily.</p> <p>Feet may become sore from too much walking or uncomfortable shoes.</p> <p>A person can leave the home or facility and be at great risk for getting lost or hurt.</p> <p>The person is at risk for falling.</p>	<p>When is wandering unsafe?</p>
<p>Falls</p>	<p>A fall for any older adult can be risky. Some of the things that contribute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visual spatial changes can contribute to feelings of disorientation. The person may not be able to tell where their body is in relation to space. ▪ Falls can occur when the furniture has been rearranged. ▪ Patterns on the floor, glaring lights and lack of contrast can contribute to falls. ▪ Side effects from some medications ▪ Chronic illnesses such as arthritis, osteoporosis make mobility a challenge. ▪ Sometimes it is hard for older adults to lift their feet and they shuffle. They are at risk of falling if there is clutter on the floor, or their feet get caught in throw rugs. ▪ Shoes that don't fit or have slippery soles 	<p>Falls</p>
<p>Wandering assessment</p>	<p>When we assess a person with dementia for risk in wandering, there are several factors to look at. They include:</p> <p>Gait and balance</p>	<p>Wandering assessment</p>

	<p>Vision and hearing Where the person was going? The bathroom, dining room or bedroom may have been destinations. What emotions was the person with dementia expressing? What was the person communicating nonverbally What was going on in the environment?</p>	
<p>Understanding why</p>	<p>We can look to several areas for clues as to why the person is wandering. We can rule out any medical conditions that may be causing discomfort. Their lifelong habits and history can give us clues about the person's lifestyle, occupation or personal patterns. We can look at former routines that the person is continuing, such as getting a newspaper or going to work at a certain time of day. A log of incidences can help us look for patterns and cues. If we use a calm and gentle approach, sometimes the person with dementia will tell you where they are going.</p>	<p>Under- standing why</p>
<p>Tips to decrease wandering</p>	<p>We can decrease wandering if we can figure out the need being expressed. Medication can be provided for pain. We can assist the person to the bathroom. When a person just needs to move, we can provide a safe area, or help them to get more exercise.</p>	<p>Tips to decrease wandering</p>
<p>More tips</p>	<p>We can use their life story to create meaningful, structured one on one activities with sensory stimulation The environment can be enhanced with personal and familiar objects Signs and other orienting cues can make the environment more predictable. We can offer verbal cues and orienting information to the person with dementia feel connected</p>	<p>More tips</p>
<p>Safe Return Program</p>	<p>A person who is at risk for wandering can be enrolled in a program through the local Alzheimer's Chapter. The Safe Return Program offers a national</p>	

	<p>registry for locating lost persons. An ID bracelet with a code and phone number is provided to the person with dementia for a small fee. If a person with dementia is at risk for wandering, a current photo and a piece of unwashed clothing can help in the search. More information can be found on the website of the National Alzheimer’s Association www.alz.org.</p>	
<p>A person with dementia speaks about sleep.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sleeplessness</p> <p>In his book, <i>My Journey Into Alzheimer’s Disease</i>, Robert Davis writes about his own personal experience with sleep. “Sleeplessness has accompanied my journey into Alzheimer’s disease. I feel as though I have forgotten how to fall asleep. I lay awake hour after hour every night. Sometimes I get only two or three hours of sleep. The less sleep I have, the more disturbed and confused I become. Depression, confusion, and paranoia accompany sleep deprivation”.</p> <p>How do you feel when you hear these thoughts?</p>	
<p>Discussion Question (5 minutes)</p>		
<p>Sleep assessment</p>	<p>The sleep pattern may be disrupted as a result of dementia. There are factors that contribute to sleeplessness. Some of these are: Physical causes such as pain, a urinary tract infection or hunger. The person may be too hot or too cold. The person may have had a disturbing dream. A person may be reacting to something that happened during the day that is disturbing them. It could be a side effect of medications. The person may see something threatening in the environment because of poor lighting. Depression can contribute to sleeplessness. There may be too much napping during the day, or not enough exercise.</p>	<p>Sleep assessment</p>
<p>Strategies to promote sleep</p>	<p>There are some strategies for developing a plan of action in helping a person with dementia that is unable to sleep.</p>	<p>Strategies to promote</p>

	<p>We can keep a log of times and circumstances surrounding incidences of sleeplessness.</p> <p>Record what was happening, when it happened and what else was going on.</p> <p>Provide pain medication at bedtime may help make the person more comfortable</p> <p>Adequate lighting so that the shadows are eliminated and the person can clearly see a path to the bathroom.</p> <p>Have the person evaluated for depression.</p> <p>Medication can be checked for side effects.</p> <p>Check the temperature of the room, and see if the person is hot or cold</p>	sleep
Promoting sleep	<p>Provide a favorite blanket or pillow to make the person more comfortable</p> <p>If a person gets tired during the day, they may benefit from a short nap after lunch</p> <p>Avoid talking about the next day's activities, focus on cues that help a person recognize it is time for sleep.</p> <p>We can promote sleep by knowing the bedtime routines of the person. (Example: Mrs. Miller enjoyed a warm bath each evening. She then had a cup of warm milk, and went to bed to say her rosary until she fell asleep)</p> <p>Is this person a day or night type of person? Some of us like to get up early and go to bed early, others would prefer to get up late and enjoy the late hours of the night.</p> <p>A soothing backrub or soft music can help the person to feel more relaxed.</p>	Promoting sleep
Medications for sleep	<p>A person who is having trouble sleeping is at a higher risk for accidents or illness.</p> <p>They may benefit from medications for a short period of time to help establish a regular routine.</p> <p>The medication may make symptoms of confusion worse.</p> <p>The medication may make the person drowsy the next day, and put them at greater risk for falling.</p>	Medication for sleep
Optional role play	Person 1-A Social Worker in a long term care facility	

	<p>Person 2- The son or daughter of a resident. The mother has recently come to live at the facility.</p> <p>The scene: The social worker is sitting in her office. The son or daughter comes in concerned about her mother. She is having problems with sleeplessness. She has moderate dementia and was on a sleep medication at home. She fell twice at home and then came to live at the facility.</p>	
	<p>Activities</p> <p>When a person with dementia is agitated or distressed, sometimes an activity can provide some type of distraction.</p> <p>We can provide a familiar task that will offer comfort to the person, such as folding clothes or towels.</p> <p>Activities are an important part of dementia care. There are many types of activities. Some are done in groups with an Activities Coordinator. Others are very intimate such as bathing.</p> <p>We can incorporate past hobbies and interests into activities.</p> <p>When working with a person who has dementia, everything we do is an activity. It is an opportunity for one-on-one interaction.</p> <p>Activities provide an opportunity for a person with dementia to find comfort and joy in the moment</p> <p>When doing an activity with a person, there are some key elements for success.</p> <p>David Troxel and Virginia Bell wrote about activities in their book, <i>Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer's Care</i>.</p> <p>They talk about the benefits of involving persons with dementia in daily activities and chores.</p> <p>The authors stress the importance of tying the activities into the person's past skills and interests, and just encouraging the person to enjoy the simple things in life.</p>	<p>Activities</p>
	<p>Meaningful</p>	<p>Meaningful</p>