

Adapting to Behavior Changes



Questions? Contact: CDDERTraining@umassmed.edu

Audience

Family Caregivers

Learning Objectives

- Understand that behavior and mood may change over time.
- Be aware of the ways that a person with ADRD might behave.
- Understand that behavior is a form of communication - verbal (or spoken) and non-verbal (non-spoken)
- Introduce ways to anticipate and respond to behavior of someone with ADRD.

Action Strategies for the Trainer

Introduce the course.

We're going to watch a video that discusses how behavior might change in someone with IDD and dementia. As you watch, you may recognize some of these behaviors in people you care for. In addition to talking about what to expect, the training will also give you some strategies to help prevent and calm a person who becomes upset.

After each section, there are review questions, and we'll pause to discuss these and any questions you have so far.

Play Section 1. Pause after the self-checks.

Are there any questions or terms that need to be clarified?

Does anyone recognize these behaviors in the family member you care for?

Remind people to respect privacy and dignity by maintaining confidentiality of group members

Introduce Section 2:

This next section will talk about why these behaviors might occur. As you listen, you'll hear the message that someone's behavior is a way for them to communicate something to you.

Play Section 2. Pause after the self-checks.

Are there any questions?

Does anyone want to share behaviors they may have seen. Follow up with:

- *What might have caused the person's reaction?*
- *What was going on at the time – in the environment, with the person?*
- *What might the person have tried to communicate through their behavior?*

Introduce Section 3:

This next section will offer some strategies that you can try to prevent distressing behavior and ways to calm someone who becomes upset.

Play Section 3.

Let's review some strategies that we've just heard about.

- *Think about the home in which your loved ones live – where are some quiet spaces that will allow them to pace or sit to calm down?*
- *Think about all the distractions in the home that could be distracting or confusing. What things can you reduce or eliminate? (Radio? TV? Clutter?)*
- *Think about what your loved one finds calming or soothing. Do they have favorite objects or activities? (A comforting item of clothing? A pillow or stuffed animal? Music?)*

Discussion and Activities

Activities for further discussion and understanding.

Activity One

Discussion

You and your family member love to do crafts. Let's talk about how you might plan the activity so that they're more likely to be alert and happily engaged.

Think about:

- When to schedule it
- How to set up the activity space
- How to involve your family member
- How to support and communicate with them

Activity Two

Discussion (or if people are comfortable, role play)

Your family member is agitated because their grandmother was supposed to take them out to lunch. You know their grandmother passed away a few years ago. The person insists that she is late but is coming.

- How might you handle this situation?
- What are some things you might say?
- What tone of voice would you use?
- What are some things you can suggest doing?

Activity Three

Discussion/Brainstorm

Brainstorm ways to involve the person's friends, peers or other family members in the person's life.

- Think about ways to explain the person's behavior.
- Think of ways you can support others who are concerned.

Wrap up

Any other questions or comments

Resources

- [NTG screening tool](#)
- [Dementia Screening and Diagnosis](#)
- [After the Diagnosis](#)
- [Creating a Memory Café](#)
- [End of Life Planning](#)
- [MOLST training webinar](#)
- [Aging Information and Webinars](#)
- [Massachusetts Department of Developmental Service, Family Support Center](#)
- [Mass Council on Aging](#)
- [Alzheimer's Association](#)
- [Your local Aging and Disability Resource Consortia agency \(ADRC\)](#)

NB: Web Links are current as of July 2023.