Reframing Challenging Behaviors: When Dementia is Present

Becoming a Good Detective NOT a Knee Jerk Judge!

Learning to Interpret & Meet Unmet Needs

ABCs to Change Behavior

A = Antecedents
B = Behavior
C = Consequences

Start with ‘B’

What behaviors are we talking about?

Examples…
Impact on Life & Interactions?
What Are the Most Common Issues That Come Up???

- Not going to the MD
- No F PoA or HC PoA
- ‘Losing’ Important Things
- Getting Lost
- Unsafe task performance
- Repeated calls & contacts
- Refusing
- ‘Bad mouthing’ you to others
- Making up stories
- Resisting care
- Swearing & cursing
- Mixing day & night
- No solid sleep time
- Paranoid/delusional thinking
- Shadowing
- Eloping or Wandering
- Seeing things & people
- Getting ‘into’ things
- Threatening caregivers
- Undressing
- Being rude
- Feeling ‘sick’
- Striking out at others
- Falls & injuries
- Infections & pneumonias
- Not eating or drinking
- Contractures & immobility

Why Do These Things Happen?

- EVERYTHING is affected
  - Thoughts
  - Words
  - Actions
  - Feelings
- It is progressive
  - More brain dies over time
  - Different parts get hit
  - Constant changing
- It is variable
  - Moment to moment
  - Morning to night
  - Day to day
  - Person to person
- Dementia is predictable
  - Specific brain parts
  - Typical spread
  - Some parts preserved

Positron Emission Tomography (PET): Alzheimer’s Disease Progression vs. Normal Brain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Early Alzheimer’s</th>
<th>Late Alzheimer’s</th>
<th>Child</th>
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Why Might These Things **NOT** Happen?

- Dementia is individualistic
- The person ‘doesn’t have it in them…’
- The situation doesn’t come up
- Other conditions keep it from happening
- Caregivers have great skills
- The dementia isn’t bad enough yet
- You get LUCKY!

Go to the ‘A’

Antecedents
What is DRIVING the Behavior?

What Makes ‘STUFF’ Happen?

- SIX pieces…
  - The type & level of dementia … NOW
  - The person & who they have been
    - Personality, preferences & history
  - Other medical conditions & sensory status
  - The environment – setting, sound, sights
  - The whole day… how things fit together
  - People - How the helper helps -
    - Approach, behaviors, words, actions, & reactions
So – A Quick Look at ‘C’

Consequences – What Happens?

Traditionally
• We blame
• We ‘knee jerk’ react
• We treat the immediate
• We become ‘parental’
• We become judges
• We give up
• We go thru the motions
• We use drugs – #1
  – anti-anxiety & anti-psychotic

Non-Traditionally
• Become a detective
• Get EVERYONE involved early and often
• Re-look & monitor - lots
• Change what is easiest first
• Change what can be controlled
• Celebrate all improvements
• Start with OURSELVES

What Can YOU Control? OR NOT!

CONTROL...
– The environment – setting, sound, sights
– The whole day... how things fit together
– How the helper helps -
  • Approach, behaviors, words, actions, & reactions

NOT CONTROL
– The person & who they have been
  • Personality, preferences & history
– The type & level of dementia ... NOW
– Other medical conditions & sensory status
For your persons with problem behaviors…

What are the behaviors that ‘challenge’ you?

Describe the Behavior

• Consider video to investigate
• Use a sensory approach
  – look, listen, feel, smell, taste, movement
• Use objective language to describe
• Check out the environment
  – Look at public, personal, intimate space issues
  – Get in their ‘shoes’ & position
• Pay attention to cues and responses

Most ‘Behavior’ is caused by UNMET NEED
Top TEN ‘UNMET NEEDS’!

Unmet Physical Needs
- Hungry or Thirsty
- Tired or Over-energized
- Elimination – need to/did
- Temperature – too hot/cold
- IN PAIN!!!
  - Joints - skeleton
  - Creases or folds
  - Surface-surface contacts
  - Systems – head/heart/gut/bladder
  - Old injury/pain sites

Unmet Emotional Needs
- Angry
- Sad
- Lonely
- Scared
- BORED

Given the Abilities of the Person

Who and What SHOULD be asked to CHANGE?

THEN…

- Use a Problem Solving Process
- Know the person
- Build Caregiver Skills & Education
- Create & Control the Environment
What Do They Do?

- Question
- Refuse
- Release – verbal
- Intimidate – physical
- Tension reduction

What Should You Do?

- Be supportive
- Offer choices & be directive
- Set realistic limits
- Act – Take control
- Re-connect

Why will they do ‘stuff’?
Unmet Needs & Trying to Communicate

- Physiological factors
- Physical factors
- Psychological factors
- Social factors
Some Key Beliefs & Principles:

- All people need to be needed – nurturing is a critical part of life worth living
- Dementia Steals Away Roles and Responsibilities that Make Us WHO We Are
- Activities can make a critical difference in the health and well-being of people with dementia
- Used Appropriately for the degree of involvement – the ‘Just Right’ Challenge

Brain atrophy

- the brain actually shrinks
- cells wither then die
- abilities are lost
- with Alzheimer’s area of loss are fairly predictable
- … as is the progression
- BUT the experience is individual…
Memory Loss

- Losses
  - Immediate recall
  - Attention to selected info
  - Recent events
  - Relationships
- Preserved abilities
  - Long ago memories
  - Confabulation!
  - Emotional memories
  - Motor memories

Understanding

- Losses
  - Can’t interpret information
  - Can’t make sense of words
  - Gets off target
- Preserved abilities
  - Can get facial expression
  - Hears tone of voice
  - Can get some non-verbals

Language

- Losses
  - Can’t find the right words
  - Word Salad
  - Vague language
  - Single phrases
  - Sounds & vocalizing
  - Can’t make needs known
- Preserved abilities
  - singing
  - automatic speech
  - Swearing/sex words/forbidden words
Impulse & Emotional Control

- Losses
  - becomes labile & extreme
  - think it - say it
  - want it - do it
  - see it - use it
- Preserved
  - desire to be respected
  - desire to be in control
  - regret after action

Self-Care Skills

- Losses
  - initiation & termination
  - tool manipulation
  - sequencing
- Preserved Abilities
  - motions and actions
  - the doing part
  - cued activity

Factors to Assess...

- Type & Level of dementia
- Personal history
- Health history
- Caregiver approach & assist
- Environment
- Schedule & flow of the day
Progression of Changes

- What is lost
- What is retained
- What is typical behavior
- What helps & works
- Levels – Diamonds-Pearls

Positive Progression

GEMS...

- Sapphires
- Diamonds
- Emeralds
- Ambers
- Rubies
- Pearls

Now for the GEMS...

- Sapphires – True Blue – Slower BUT Fine
- Diamonds – Repeats & Routines, Cutting
- Emeralds – Going – Time Travel – Where?
- Ambers – In the moment - Sensations
- Rubies – Stop & Go – No Fine Control
- Pearls – Hidden in a Shell - Immobile
Environmental Factors & Changes

- Setting
- Props
- Programming

Environmental Aids

- Setting
  - familiar
  - friendly
  - functional
  - forgiving (safe)

Environmental Aids

- Props
  - visible & invisible
  - timely
  - available
  - matched to ability
  - matched to interests
Daily Routines &  
Client-Centered Programming

- Old habits and routines
- Patterns during the 24 hrs
- A time to rest, work, play...socialize
- Your needs... my time

To Intervene...

- Where will you start???
  - An idea –
    - caregiver education
    - caregiver skill building

Then...

- Observe & document the ‘behavior’ thoroughly – look for ‘unmet need’ & effort to communicate
  - what is the pattern
  - when does it happen
  - where does it happen
  - who is involved
  - what is said, done, attempted
  - what makes it better... worse
Is There ANYTHING we can CHANGE to make things BETTER?

• If NO - leave it alone

• If YES - its time to problem solve
  – call the team together
  – put on the thinking caps

Explore all of the following -

Three to KNOW ABOUT & RESPECT
• Type & level of dementia
• Personal background information
• Health information

Three to CHANGE & MODIFY to HELP
• Caregiver approach & assistance
• Environmental issues
• Habits, schedules & time of day

Re-look at the ‘problematic challenging behavior’ …
THINK – UNMET NEEDS

• What does the person need?

• What is the meaning of the behavior?

• Do you understand the behavior better?
Make a PLAN!

- Who will do what
- When will it be done
- How will it work
- What environmental change is needed
- What props are needed - where will they be

Implement your plan!

- Keep track of progress
- Document what is happening
- Communicate among the team members
- CELEBRATE - if it is!
- Rethink - if it isn’t working…
  You missed something OR the ‘change’ isn’t happening as you planned – Is it ‘controlled’? – monitored?

Some KEY Helping Behaviors

- A Positive **Physical Approach**
- Strong & Desirable **Visual Cues**
- Short & Effective **Verbal Cues**
- Minimal & Familiar **Tactile Cues**
- Use what you **know about the person**
- Change the **environment** to help
Believe -

People with dementia
Are doing
The BEST they can!

What shouldn’t we do???

• Argue
• Tell ‘WHOPPERS’ – that relate to emotions
• Ignore problem behaviors
• Try a possible solution only once
• Give up
• Let them do whatever they want to
• Force them to do it

So WHAT should we do???

Remember
who
has the healthy brain!
Take Time for YOU!

10 Minute Stress Tamers

- **Sit quietly** in calm surroundings with soft lights and pleasant scents.
- **Aromatherapy** – lavender, citrus, vanilla, cinnamon, peppermint, fresh cut grass.
- **Breathe deeply** – rest your mind & oxygenate
- **Soak** - in a warm bath, or just your hands or feet
- **Read** - Spiritual readings, poetry, inspirational readings, or one chapter of what you like…
- **Laugh and smile** - Watch classic comedians, Candid Camera, America’s Funniest Home Videos, look at kid or animal photos…
- **Stretch** – front to back, side to side, & across
- **Garden** – work with plants

10 Minute Stress Tamers

- **Beanbag heat therapy.** Fill a sock with dry beans and sew or tie closed. Heat bag and beans in a microwave for 30 seconds at a time. Place on tight muscles and massage gently; relax for ten minutes.
- **Remember the good times** - Record oral memories - scrapbooks, photo journals, keepsake memory picture frames. Just jot!
- **Do a little** on a favorite **hobby**.
- **Have a cup of decaffeinated tea or coffee**
- **Play a brain game** – crosswords, jigsaws, jeopardy, jumbles…
- **Look through the hymnal and find a favorite** – hum it all the way through…
10 Minute Stress Tamers

• **Books on Tape** - Rest your eyes and read
  • **Soothing sounds** –
    – Music you love
    – Music especially for stress relief
    – Recorded sounds of nature
  • Listen to **coached relaxation recordings**
  • **Pamper Yourself** – think of what you LOVE and give yourself permission to do it for 10 minutes
  • **Neck rubs or back rubs** – use the ‘just right’ pressure
  • **Hand Massages** – with lotion or without – its up to you...

• **Take a walk.**
• **Sit** in the sun.
• **Rock** on the porch.
• **Pray** or read a passage from scripture
• **Journal** - Take the opportunity to “tell it like it is.”
  • Cuddle and stroke a **pet**.
  • Have that cup of coffee or tea with a **special friend** who listens well.
  • Pay attention to **your personality.**
    – If you rejuvenate being alone, then seek solitude.
    – If you rejuvenate by being with others, seek company.

**I Will Change!**

*(to the tune of This Little Light of Mine)*

By Teepa Snow
I’m gonna meet and greet
Before I start to treat
I’m gonna meet and greet
Before I check your feet
I’m gonna meet and greet
Before I help you eat

How I start sets us up to succeed!

No more just “Getting’ it Done”
I’m gonna DO with you
No more just “Getting’ it Done”
I’m gonna help you thru
No more just “Getting’ it Done”
We’re gonna work, we two

Cause if I do it ALL, we BOTH LOSE!

I’m gonna laugh and dance with you
Not just watch and frown
I’m gonna laugh and dance with you
Not just stand around
I’m gonna laugh and dance with you
We’ll really go to town

For the POWER of JOY I have found!