

Approaches to Dementia Care

This list was created to assist facilities in considering different approaches to care for residents that display behaviors related to cognitive impairment. It is by no means an all-inclusive list and interventions should be applied based on an individual's needs.

Intervention Category	Approach to Care	Behaviors Addressed
<p>Person Centered Care</p> <p>Focusing on the perspective of the resident, rather than on the task at hand, maintains and promotes quality of life for all residents.</p>	<p>Consider the Way That You're Responding -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid saying "no" or implying "no" because this will almost immediately result in the resident resisting care, becoming upset or fighting with you. • Don't try to help them make sense of whatever the situation is, it's fruitless. • Validate their emotional experience and go along with whatever they are saying as if it was factual. • If the resident perceives that something is wrong or is upset, apologize for the situation, even if you are not at fault. Blame yourself! • Subtle changes for big outcomes – use open ended questions to get the best response. Instead of "Where is..." "What is...?" Say, "Tell me about..." • Tone of voice means everything. 	<p>These approaches can be applied to all behaviors associated with dementia.</p>
	<p>Be a Performer in Their Play - Working with residents suffering from dementia requires us to improvise. Meet the resident where they are. The world is a stage! Let's say the resident does not want to get dressed. What are some things the resident enjoyed during their life? Are they used to going out to dinner with their spouse on Sunday? Understand the things that make the resident tick and use this information to your benefit.</p> <p><i>Life history provides context to their current situation.</i> "Mrs. Jones, do you want to get washed up and dressed so you can be ready for Sunday dinner?" It doesn't matter than its Wednesday. Keep adding details or rephrasing the request until you're successful.</p>	
	<p>Behavior is Communication - Behavior is an outward expression of an internal state, so what is happening to the resident? They may lack the ability to explain to you what they are feeling so it is your job to figure out what you can do to help them feel better. Are they agitated because they are in pain or their shoes are too tight? The solution may be right in front of you.</p>	

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<p>Person Centered Care</p> <p>Focusing on the perspective of the resident, rather than on the task at hand, maintains and promotes quality of life for all residents.</p>	<p>Lower the Volume - If the resident is agitated or resisting care, what is happening in their immediate environment? Is the TV on? Are people yelling in the hallway? Are doors slamming? Is there an activity in the immediate area that's stimulating? What can you do to make their surrounding calm and soothing? Does the resident need to have lunch in a different area today? Do they need to sit in the stillness of their own room for a while? Lower the volume of their surroundings.</p>	<p>These approaches can be applied to all behaviors associated with dementia.</p>
	<p>Don't Get Hung up on Tasks - You get to work, you clock in, you get your assignment, you start knocking on doors and entering rooms, thinking about who needs a shower on your shift, about the resident that gives you a hard time every day, about who needs help with their breakfast... <i>STOP</i>. Don't treat your day like an endless checklist of tasks to complete, because residents pick up on that. When you just go through the motions, this leads to frustration for both the resident and yourself. Take each situation as it comes. If a resident on your assignment is having a bad day, look at their care needs from a different perspective and adjust your approach. If they're having a good day, take the time to examine how and why and use that in the future.</p>	
	<p>Make a Meaningful Connection -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat back what they're saying to you... "I want to understand how you're feeling, is it XYZ....?" • Resist the urge to "correct" residents with dementia. Focus on positive interactions to gain trust. Let's say Martha wandered into June's room and took earrings that were not hers. Instead of rushing up to Martha to say, "Those aren't your earrings, those are June's, let me have them," approach Martha with words of affirmation. "You look great today Martha, are you headed to Bingo?" Have a conversation with her in which you praise her and provide positive feedback and then perhaps say something like, "You found the earrings I was looking for, I know right where those go." • Use humor – everybody likes to laugh and laughing with someone creates a bond and establishes trust. Look to see what the resident finds humorous, maybe it's a catch phrase, a limerick, or something from their past that amuses them. Start your day by greeting them with something funny to ease tension. 	