

Tips and Techniques for Demystifying Challenging Situations

Identifying and meeting needs



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Dementia Challenge Situations

- A woman who will spend the day beating the chairs and tables loudly with a musical instrument
- Any approach is met with “GIT!”
- If you persist, “she will swat ya.”
- She refuses all offers of water, sitting down, or going to the bathroom



Examples of What Are Usually Called “Challenging” Behaviors

- ‘Losing’ Important Things
- Getting Lost – time, place
- Unsafe task performance
- Repeated calls & contacts
- Refusing help & care
- ‘Bad mouthing’ about staff
- Making up stories
- Undoing what is done
- Swearing/cursing, sex talk, slur
- Making frequent 911 calls
- Mixing day & night
- Sleep problems
- Not following care/rx plans
- No initiation – can’t get started
- Not talking any more
- Infections & pneumonias
- Public urination
- Paranoid/delusional thinking
- Shadowing - following
- Eloping or Wandering
- Hallucinations
- Getting ‘into’ things
- Threatening caregivers
- Problems w/intimacy & sexuality
- Being rude - intruding
- Feeling ‘sick’ – not doing ‘anything’
- Use of drugs or alcohol to ‘cope’
- Striking out at others
- Contractures & immobility
- Falls & injuries
- Problems w/ eating or drinking
- Perseveration–can’t stop repeating
- Undressing in public OR not changing when needed



Top Ten Unmet Needs of People Living with Dementia



Five Expressions of Emotional Distress

- Angry**
irritated – angry – furious
- Sad**
dissatisfied – sad – hopeless
- Lonely**
solitary – lonely – abandoned/trapped
- Scared**
anxious – scared – terrified
- Bored**
disengaged – bored – useless

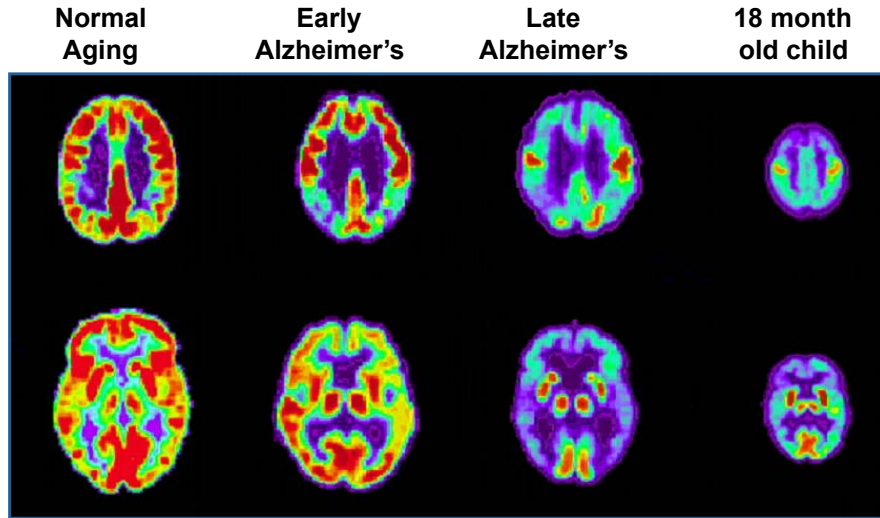
Five Physical Needs

- Intake**
hunger or thirst
- Energy**
tired or revved up
- Elimination**
need to go or did
- Discomfort**
temperature or sensations
- PAIN!!!**
joints, internal or external systems

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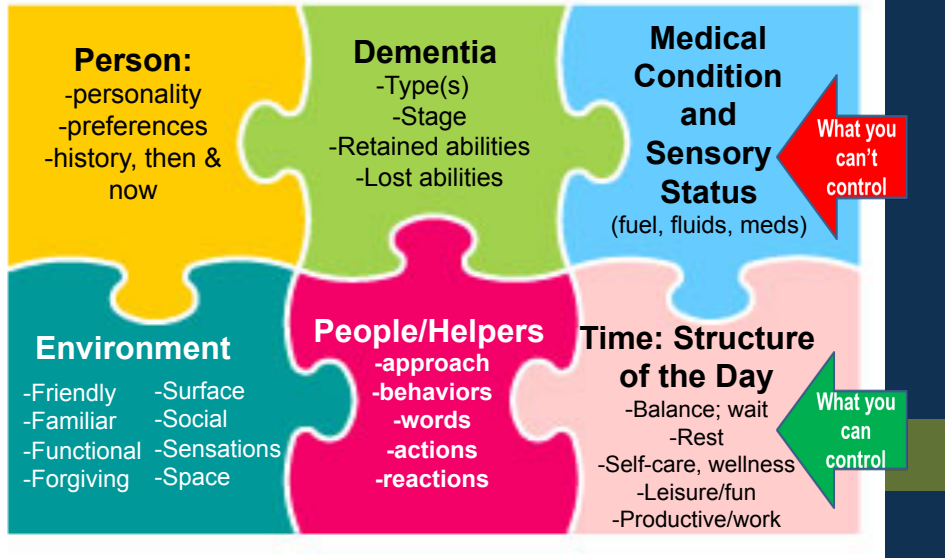
Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Alzheimer's Disease Progression vs. Normal Brains



G. Small, UCLA School of Medicine



What Makes 'Behaviors' Happen?



The GEMS...



Sapphires: True Blue – Healthy Brain

**Diamonds: Routines & Routines Rule -
Clear/Sharp**


**Emeralds: Green/On the Go with Purpose–
Naturally Flawed**

**Ambers: Caught In a moment of time –
Caution Required**

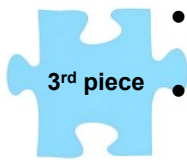
**Rubies: Deep & Strong –
Others stop seeing what is possible**

**Pearls: Hidden in a Shell –
Beautiful Moments to Behold**




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Medical Condition & Sensory Status*



- Fuel and fluids
- Other medical & psychiatric conditions
- Sensory status – vision, hearing, sense of touch, balance, smell, taste
- Medications and treatments

*may have ability to modify or attenuate some of these


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Environment: 4 F's & 4 S's



4 F's: Friendly, Familiar, Functional, Forgiving

- What helps? What hurts?
- We control whether it is supportive
- Physical (sensory experience)
- People or how to engage socially
- Programming: to support what they like *and* what they need

4 S's: Surface, Social, Sensations, Space

- Surface: Sit-stand-lie down-work
- Social: People-activities-role-expectations
- Sensations: See-hear-feel-smell-taste
- Space: Intimate-personal-public



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Structure of the Day



- Daily routines and programming
- Second piece we can control
- Filling the day with valued engagement
- Gem level programming

Types of **Meaningful Activities**

1. **Productive**: give value and purpose
2. **Leisure**: have fun, interact
3. **Self-care**: personal care, body & brain, wellness
4. **Restorative**: re-energize and restore spirit



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US! People & Caregivers

Should **NOT**:

- Argue
- Make up stuff not true
- Ignore behavior problems
- Try a possible solution only once
- Give up
- Let them do whatever they want
- Force them to do what you want
- Remember who has healthy brain
- We have to control us; we can change
- Recognize they are doing the best they can!



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Ways to support as Caregivers EVERY TIME!!

1. PPA™ & Visual-Verbal-then-Touch cues
2. Positive Personal Connections
3. HuH™
4. Positive Action Starters (PAS)



Green= It's the AM workshop!



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Positive Personal Connections (PPC)

1. Greet or Meet



Introduce yourself and use their preferred name

- “Hi __, I am __.” or, “I am __ and you are?”

2. Say something NICE

Indicate something about them of value

- “Nice shirt!” “You are one of the smartest people I know”

3. Be friendly

Share about you then leave a blank

- “I’m from Michigan, and you’re from...?”



4. Notice something

Point out something in the environment

5. Be curious

Explore a possible unmet like, want or need



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Positive Action Starters (PAS)



- 1. Help** – Be sure to compliment their skill in this area, then ask for help. *“I could use your help?”*
- 2. Try** – Hold up or point to the item you would like to use, possibly sharing in the dislike of the item or task, *“Well, let’s try this.”*
- 3. Choice** – Try using visual cues to offer two possibilities or one choice with something else as the other option. *“Coffee or Tea?”*
“This? Or something else?”
- 4. Short and Simple** – Give only the first piece of information, *“It’s about time to ...”*
- 5. Step by Step** – Only give a small part of the task at first, *“Lean forward....”*



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Give SIMPLE INFO

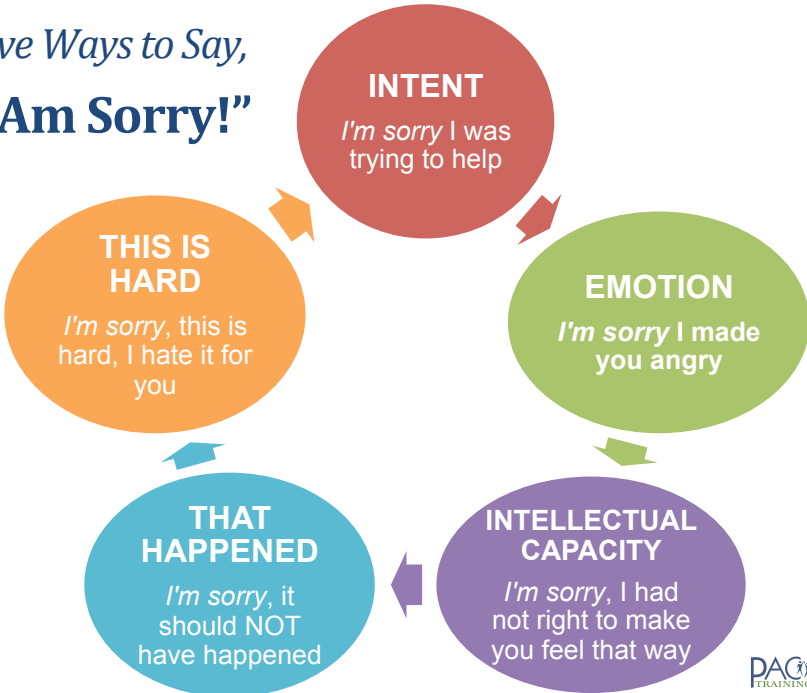
- Visual matched WITH verbal
 - *It's about time for...* tap your watch/wrist
 - *Let's go this way.* Point
 - *Here's your socks.* Hold up their sock
 - *Coffee or tea?* Raise coffee carafe then tea bag
- DON'T ask questions you DON'T want to hear the answer to...
- Acknowledge their response/reaction
- LIMIT words – Keep it SIMPLE

And then WAIT!!!!



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Five Ways to Say, "I Am Sorry!"



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