

# Difficult Behaviors & How to Handle Them

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[Gathering Place Website](#)

# Who to Contact

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# Alzheimer's Disease

- Alzheimer's Association research indicates that 10.7% of people over 65 have Alzheimer's and 8% have mild cognitive impairment so...
- In Brazoria County: 5,188 seniors have AD and 3,879 seniors have MCI
- 80-90% of people with Parkinson's will develop dementia.

# Statistics

- 7.2 million Americans 65+ are living with Alzheimer's disease.
- 2/3 are women
- 74% are over age 75
- 12 million people are caregivers for someone with AD.
- 3 in 10 people over the age of 85 have AD.
- It is the 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death among seniors.

# A Look at Challenging Behaviors



# Aggression

## Causes:

- Pain
- Stress
- Changes in routine
- Trouble with communication

## What it Looks Like:

- Verbal (swearing or shouting)
- Physical (hitting, kicking, throwing things)

# How to Handle Aggression

- Remain calm
- Identify the underlying cause: Was there a change to routine?
- Is there trouble communicating?
- Use strategies such as:
  - Distraction
  - Redirection
  - Simplifying the environment
  - Using a consistent routine

# Wandering

## Causes:

- Confusion
- Change in routine
- Agitation
- Trouble communicating

## What it Looks Like

- Pacing or leaving the area  
(often due to boredom, restlessness, or disorientation)

# How to Handle Wandering

- Remain calm
- Don't panic or yell
- Talk in a soothing, calm tone
- Help redirect back to the correct area

# Repetitive Questions or Statements

## Causes:

- Disorientation
- Confusion
- Change in routine

## What it Looks Like:

- Asking the same question over and over.
- Repeating the same phrase or sentence over and over.

# How to Handle Repetitiveness

- Speak in a soothing, calm voice
- Respond to the questions when asked.
- Listen attentively.
- Suggested not to correct the individual when they repeat something multiple times.

○ [Quiz Part A](#)



# Paranoia and Suspicion

## Causes:

- Disorientation
- Confusion
- Change in routine or environment

## What it Looks Like:

- Believing others are stealing from or harming them.
- Having suspicion without cause.

# How to Handle Paranoia and Suspicion

- Be reassuring
- Listen attentively
- Take note of what is being said (document)
- Remain calm
- Don't blame



# Confusion and Disorientation

## Causes:

- Change in routine or environment
- Trouble communicating
- Restlessness
- Tiredness

## What it Looks Like:

- Difficulty understanding language
- Getting lost
- Being unable to complete familiar tasks

# How to Handle Confusion and Disorientation

- Remain calm
- Speak in a soothing voice
- Be reassuring
- Avoid yelling and talking loudly

# Restlessness and Fidgeting

## Causes:

- Change in routine
- Change in environment
- Change to eating habit(s)
- Difficulty communicating
- Boredom
- Tiredness

## What it Looks Like:

- Wringing hands
- Tapping/moving foot or feet
- Squirming in chair
- Folding/unfolding paper or napkins
- Moving items around on table

# How to Handle Restlessness and Fidgeting

- Make sure the person has plenty to eat and drink
- Have a daily routine, including daily walks
- Give them something to occupy their hands if they fidget a lot (worry beads, fidget toy, box of items that has meaning to them)
- [Quiz Part B](#)

# Loss of Self-Confidence

## Causes:

- Disorientation
- Confusion
- Change in routine
- Change in environment
- Unsteady hands
- Memory impairment worsens

## What it Looks Like:

- Saying that they can no longer do a particular task.
- Not wanting to participate in an activity they once enjoyed.

# How to Handle Loss of Self-Confidence

- Reassure them that the activity, or getting there, will be straightforward.
- Give clear explanations
- Remain calm
- Don't argue

# What is Sundowning?



# Sundowning: Agitation in the Evening

## Causes:

- Low lighting
- Fatigue
- Disrupted routines
- Overstimulation
- Unfamiliar surroundings

## What it Looks Like:

- Increased confusion
- Agitation and restlessness
- Mood changes
- Aggression
- Difficulty with tasks
- Paranoia, delusions, hallucinations

# How to Handle Sundowning

- Create a calm and consistent environment.
- Establish a routine
- Encourage daytime activity
- Provide natural light
- Reduce evening stimulation
- Manage shadows
- Create a calming bedtime routine
- Remain calm and patient
- Listen and reassure
- Identify triggers
- Distract and redirect

# Inappropriate Behaviors

- Unwanted touching
- Unwanted comments
- Hugging/touching when not asked for
- Making comments about going home with other people (not the spouse)
- Sexual comments
- Trying to undress in public

# How to Handle Inappropriate Behavior

- **Modify the environment:**
- Limit overstimulation (crowds, noise, bright lights)
- Keep familiar settings and routines
- Offer private, quiet areas when needed
- **Redirect gently:**
- Shift the topic or activity when behaviors happen
- Avoid confrontation, and change the focus instead
- **Encourage meaningful activity:**
- Use music, art, or tactile tasks to reduce restlessness
- Include light exercise or movement during the day
- **Build supportive routines:**
- Use consistent schedules and clear expectations
- Reinforce boundaries with kindness and structure
- **Connect with caregiver communities:**
- Connecting with a local support group can offer tips and empathy from people navigating the same experiences
- Post your questions on forums for others to respond to

# Inappropriate Behavior: Video

- Inappropriate Behaviors

# Final Quiz: Part C



○ [Quiz Part C](#)

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