

Understanding behaviours in dementia with the

ABC

Approach



Most people living with dementia will experience changes in their moods and behaviours.

These changes can be an attempt to communicate discomfort and distress when people with dementia have difficulty expressing their physical and emotional needs or making sense of their environment.

The ABC Approach can help you **investigate the physical, emotional, social, or environmental factors** that may be contributing to a change in mood or behaviour.



A

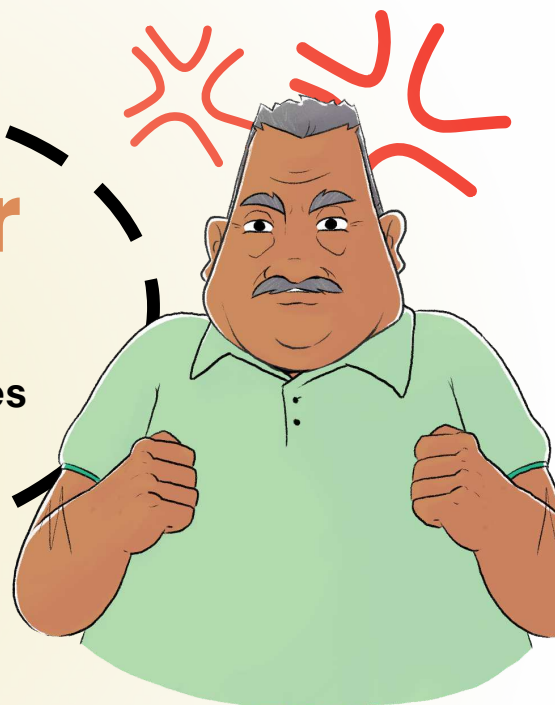
is for **Antecedent**

What was happening before the behaviour started? **Who else was present?** Consider the **impact of sensory factors** like light, temperature and noise.

B

is for **Behaviour**

What exactly is the person doing that is concerning? What **unmet needs or memories** may be playing a role in the behaviour?



C

is for **Consequence**

What makes the **symptoms better or worse?** **How is this behaviour maintained** by environmental or interpersonal factors? What does the behaviour **achieve?**



Tips for responding well to behaviours in dementia



Uncover and meet the person's physical, emotional and psychological needs. Think about basic needs we all share, like needs for pain medication, sleep, hydration, a kind word or a loving touch.



Replace antecedents to mood or behavior change to create a supportive environment for positive interactions. Adjust sensory inputs like music, voices, heat, light and even strong smells. Are hearing aids or glasses needed?



Encourage meaningful engagement in activities that are based on the person's unique interests and current abilities. Invite them to help complete chores, support them to engage in leisure activities, plan connections with old and new friends.



Behaviours in Dementia Toolkit

Practical & Evidence Informed

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CCSMH
Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health

Free online library for health care providers, care partners & families supporting people experiencing behaviours in dementia.

www.BehavioursInDementia.ca

