

Reframing How We Think About Difficult Behavioral Expressions Associated with Dementia

By: Keri Morante, MA
Director of Memory Care
Visiting Angels of Michiana

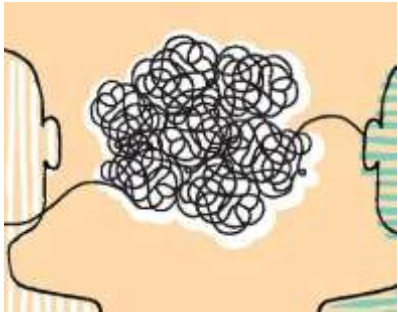


What are some difficult behavioral expressions?

- Aggression
- Hitting
- Refusing Care
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Hoarding
- Repetitive questions
- Aimless wandering
- Sundowning
- Sexual Inappropriateness

What causes these behavioral expressions?

- Inability to communicate
- Confusion
- Pain or physical discomfort
- Loss of control



How we've learned to deal with these expressions

- The 4 R's
 - Reassure
 - Reconsider
 - Redirect
 - Relax
- Don't Confront the person
- Give them the space to be angry alone (if safe)
- Comfort
- Distract
- Empathy

Cognitive Behavioral Education Model

How thoughts directly influence what we do and what we say.



- The way individuals perceive a situation is more indicative of their reaction than the situation itself. Individuals' perceptions are often distorted and unhelpful, particularly when they are distressed. Identifying distressing thoughts helps us change distorted thinking and create positive outcomes in interactions, relationships, and as a caregiver.



The basics of cognitive education model

- Cognition -the mental processes that take place in the brain, including thinking, attention, language, learning, memory and perception.
- Behavior-the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially toward others.
- Consequence-the result or outcome of a behavior. These can be positive or negative
- Thinking errors or cognitive distortions-these are irrational thoughts that lead to dissatisfactory consequences. These could be negative interactions, or poor decision making.

Understanding how our thoughts impact us as caregivers

- Irrational thoughts can lead to negative interactions and experiences as a caregiver.
- Controlling your own thoughts will give power back to you as a caregiver. We must never forget that caregivers are losing control of their lives, also.
- Our thoughts directly inform our actions and determine our consequences. If we can change our thoughts, we can change our situations.
- Our thoughts directly inform our behavior and communication. Positive thinking leads to positive interactions. Negative thinking leads to negative interactions.

Basic Thought Model

Situation, thought,
consequence



Stinking Thinking or Thinking Errors

- Harmful thoughts that lead to negative consequences and interactions.
- These thoughts almost always rationalize, minimize, or justify a behavior for us.
- They do serve an important purpose-to get us to do things we shouldn't!!!
- Please see “Stinking Thinking” Hand out

How do we change our negative thoughts?

- Hear your thoughts—listen for them.
- Identify thoughts as helpful or harmful (stinky).
- Use Self-Talk and empathy to change these thoughts.

Building successful care interactions.

- Hearing and identifying thoughts is 80% of the trick to changing them. You can't change what you can't hear.
 - Self-Talk-internal dialogue that you can use to talk yourself out of negative thought patterns.
 - Coping skills-use reliable coping skills to manage stress.
 - Empathy- applying empathy once you have identified negative thoughts is very effective.
- Cooking dinner and your loved one is pacing and asking to go home, NOW!
- ↓
- Here we go again!
 - I am ignoring this
 - I have no time for this.
 - He doesn't care how much I do.
 - He knows he's home!
- ↓
- Loved one is increasingly anxious and begins yelling. You Begin yelling and saying things you regret.



Identify and change the thoughts.

- Cooking dinner and your loved one is pacing and asking to go home, NOW!



- Here we go again!
- I am ignoring this (denial)
- I have no time for this.
- (black and white thinking)
- He doesn't care how much I do.
- (justifying)
- He knows he's home!

(Justifying)



- Loved one is increasingly anxious and begins yelling. You Begin yelling and saying things you regret.

I know what to do
I can calm him down

He must be confused and
scared.

No, he doesn't it must be
hard.



Now let's use self talk and diagram these together!