

Managing Challenging Situations

It is best to think of the behavior in question as “challenging” rather than as a “problem.” Ask yourself, “What is he/she trying to communicate?” or “What are his/her unmet emotional or physical needs?” Is he responding to the environment (environmentally bound); doing what people do in that space?

Last Name, First Name: _____ Room: _____

GEM® State: ☐ Sapphire ☐ Diamond ☐ Emerald ☐ Amber ☐ Ruby ☐ Pearl Date _____

Risk Factors: ☐ Dehydration ☐ Malnutrition ☐ Social Isolation ☐ Falls ☐ Other _____

Strategies: ☐ Hand-under-hand (HUH) ☐ Visual / Verbal / Touch ☐ Positive Physical Approach

Cues Needed: ☐ Initiation ☐ Sequencing ☐ Switch Gears ☐ Memory Book ☐ Music _____

CHECK THE ONE THAT APPLIES: ☐ I WILL NOTICE IF YOU ARE LATE ☐ I BARELY NOTICE DAY/NIGHT

Proactively alter your approach

- Never take his/her actions personally.
- Become a detective; what is the underlying trigger?
- Shift from judgment to curiosity; what unmet physical need (hunger, pain, toileting, cold/hot) or emotional need (lonely, overstimulated, too many caregivers).
- Assess your approach. Are your efforts inadvertently triggering the behavior?
- Change environment (noise, lighting, floors too shiny, crowded, location of furniture, something in the room disturbing, music, temperature).
- Don't argue. If he/she says, “There's a dead body in my bed!” don't tell him/her, “There is no dead body. Don't tell him/her you see the dead body. Say, “I can see you are concerned. I'll clean that up for you.”
- Remove the threat. If you are the threat, back off and give him/her space.
- If you decide to back off to come back later, try changing your appearance. Look different.
- Consider the person's reality; go with their flow.
- Approach in a positive way; greet before you treat, simplify language, one-step-at-a-time.
- Use hand-under-hand to guide the person through tasks to minimize resistance.
- Build trust; approach as a friend rather than an authority.
- Remember that the person's brain processes everything differently; the floor looks shiny to you but might look like water to him/her.
- Use positive language, stay flexible, use humor. Begin to sing and ask him/her to dance.
- *Respond* don't *react*. When someone else is in *fight or flight*, it's makes others respond as if everything is an emergency. Relax. Think. Be calm.
- Protect and monitor your energy. If what you are trying isn't working, back off.
- If he/she is upset, match the tone to build rapport before attempting to soothe or redirect. Be calm.