



Tool Box Topic - Alzheimer's disease and Related Disorders (ARD): Dealing with Difficult Behavior

Defined:

Behavioral problems are defined as client responses, which are considered potentially harmful to staff, others, the client himself, or family. Behavioral problems have a profound impact on quality of care, staff, morale and the client.

Difficult behaviors can be broken down into the following categories: Wandering, Disturbances in Sleeping and Eating, Agitation, Paranoia and difficulty with personal tasks. This is not to say these categories are the only forms of behavioral problems displayed by people living with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders (ARD), but their remedies may intersect other problems.

Wandering is a common hallmark of Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Stressors such as noise, clutter or crowding and unmet needs of the client can be a cause of wandering. The best idea is to reduce excess stress by identifying and anticipating the needs of the client. A person living with Alzheimer's disease should be settled in a quiet, clean, and spacious environment. Other reasons why a client living with ARD may wander include feelings of being lost, boredom, need to use the restroom or side effects of medications.

In order to prevent the patient/client from feeling lost or foreign to his or her environment, provide them with familiar objects and reassure them quite frequently that they are at home or in a safe place. Maybe a family photo or an award he or she has won always jogs their memory so keep it close by. If the client displays signs of boredom, give them a task of limited difficulty. This will keep them entertained but won't frustrate them. Making social engagement meaningful and customized with preferred familiar activities in a failure-free environment for people living with ARD is essential.

Wandering may also be caused by a need to use the bathroom. In which case, place elaborate signs or pictures on bathroom doors to help guide them. Also, it is a good idea for you to implement regular toilet times. This will keep both of you on schedule. If the client appears to be wandering due to medication side effects, the supervisor should contact the client's physician to initiate a change in prescription or to lower the dosage. Wandering can be a dangerous behavior. Consider contacting your local Alzheimer's Association to obtain additional information about 'The Wanderers Program' in their area.



There are numerous courses on [Homewatch CareGivers University](#) to support caregiver education for those providing care to the client living with ARD. Our dementia care module equips caregivers with the tools they need to successfully provide assistance.

Additionally there are courses that help caregivers that are servicing clients with difficult behaviors.

- P5835 HWCG Dementia Care Training (4 course module)
- P1087 Managing Problem Behaviors Day to Day
- P1114 Elopement Prevention in Action