

Behavior Issues

Managing Behavior

Non-Pharmacologic Approaches

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Presenter Disclosures

Donna Munic-Miller, Ph.D.

The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose
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Behavior Issues

- Behavior issues can surface early in HD and continue as the disease progresses
- Behavior issues can be distressing to an individual, family, and friends
- Behavior interventions can be useful
- Medications can be helpful, especially when certain behaviors present a danger

Common Behavior Issues in HD

Aggression

Anxiety

Apathy

Depression

Impulsive behavior and poor judgment

Irritability and emotional outbursts

Obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors

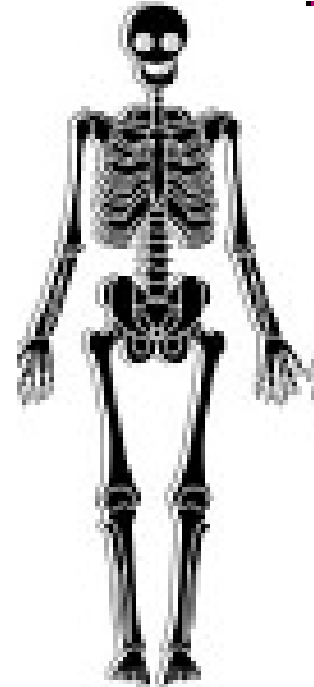
Unawareness

Causes of Behavior Issues

- A behavior may occur for different reasons
- Behavior issues may be due to physical, emotional, social, environmental, or task-related causes

Physical Causes of Behavior Issues

- Medical conditions
- Medications
- Changes in the brain
- Visual impairments
- Hearing impairments



Physical Causes of Behavior Issues

- Dehydration
- Hunger
- Constipation
- Pain
- Physical discomfort
- Fatigue and sleep problems



Emotional Causes of Behavior Issues

Depression

Fear and anxiety



Frustration

Confusion

Social Causes of Behavior Issues

Social interactions

family, friends, colleagues, and others



Social Settings

large groups,
unfamiliar social gathering

Environmental Causes of Behavior Issues

- Noise
- Over-stimulation
- Lack of activity (boredom)
- Unstructured environment
- Lack of routine
- Change in routine
- Financial stress



What Can A Care Partner Do?



Behavioral Intervention Options

- Change the antecedents – what causes the behavior (**triggers**)
- Change the consequences – what happens as a result of the behavior (**reactions**)

Intervene or Not Intervene

- Is a behavior a risk to health or safety?
- Will an intervention help a person feel comfortable, respected, and cared about?
- Is a behavior intervention worth the time, energy, or possibility of further upsetting a person?

Assess the Situation

- What is the behavior?
- When does the behavior occur?
- Where does the behavior occur?
- Who is there?
- What follows after?

Before Implementing Any Behavioral Intervention

- Review possible causes
- Rule out medical conditions
- Be aware of any medication side effects
- Identify any sensory impairments
- Set realistic goals
- Be prepared to make adjustments

Behavioral Intervention Strategies

- Plan ahead
- Promote a safer environment
- Minimize stress and novelty
- Decrease noise and distraction
- Establish routines
- Provide activity

Behavior Intervention Strategies

- Slow down
- Simplify
- Redirect and distract
- Ignoring
- Prompting and cues
- Modeling



More Behavioral Intervention Strategies

- Increase positive interactions and positive attention
- Be aware of your nonverbal behavior
- Respond to feelings
- Reassure
- Maintain calm within yourself
- Get help from others



Strategies to Avoid

- Arguing
- Threatening
- Blaming
- Shaming
- Demanding that someone stop



Strategies to Avoid

- Screaming to increase understanding
- Showing you are afraid
- Trying to grab or corner a person
- Personalizing the individual's behavior



General Considerations

- Behavior interventions require consistency, effort, and patience
- Be creative (think outside the box)
- Be flexible
- May need to use combination of strategies
- Effectiveness of intervention may vary
- Keep learning and sharing

References and Resources

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