

### How well do you know the person?

- Gather information from family or carers
- Complete or read their Life History / 'This is Me' document
- What was their job? Does this explain any of the person's behaviour - eg furniture removers, night workers, carpet fitter
- What activities are meaningful to them?
- Use an individualised Care Plan Approach, has the person or their carer been involved in creating their care plans?

### Do you have access to resources?

- Doll therapy
- Pet therapy
- Music therapy
- Art therapy
- Reminiscence therapy
- Sensory activities

### Is communication effective?

- Does the person have any hearing or visual impairment?
- Can they communicate their needs?
- Do they have expressive or receptive dysphasia?
- Are there any language barriers?
- Is your communication approach effective?

### Consider the **10 Absolutes for Alzheimer's Care-givers**

- Never Argue - Agree
- Never Reason - Divert
- Never Shame - Distract
- Never Lecture - Reassure
- Never Remember - Reminisce
- Never Say "I Told You" - Repeat
- Never Say "You Can't" - Say "Do What You Can"
- Never Command or Demand - Ask or Model
- Never Condescend - Encourage or Praise
- Never Force - Reinforce

## Non-pharmacological interventions to reduce distressing behaviours in people with dementia

### **Is the person's distress a way of communicating?**

- Pain / discomfort
- Anxiety / fear
- Embarrassment
- Under-stimulation - boredom
- Over-stimulation - loud environment

### **Are the person's needs being met?**

- Are they hungry or thirsty ?
- Do they need the toilet?
- Are they getting enough sleep?
- Are they getting enough stimulation ?
- Do they have a delirium and require treatment for infection?
- Are they too hot or cold?

### **Are there any identifiable triggers?**

- Observation and documentation can help identify triggers or identify effective approaches
- Does the person become distressed after family visit?
- Does the person become distressed at meal times?
- Is the environment too noisy?
- Does the person become distressed at a certain time of day, as in 'sundowning'?
- Does the person become distressed during personal care interventions?

### **Remember, not all behaviours that challenge care-givers have an identifiable cause**

- Who is being most affected by the behaviour?
- Are they getting some positive benefit such as sensory feedback?
- Can you use de-escalation techniques?

### **Is the person experiencing delusional thoughts or hallucinations?**

- Acknowledge what the person is experiencing
- Don't ignore them or try to prove them wrong
- Validate their feelings - what isn't real to us may be very real to them
- Provide reassurance
- Attempt to engage them in an activity meaningful to them for distraction

### **Is the person reliving a traumatic experiencing or searching for a loved one?**

- Allow the person to express their emotions
- Use validation
- Do not lie or confront the individual with reality
- Example: Is the person searching for their mother ? ... You loved your mum very much. Tell me about her, what was her name?