

The Longview Assisted Living Christian Health Care Center

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Managing Behaviors in the Assisted Living Laying the Groundwork for Transition



What is Assisted Living?



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Common Diagnosis in the Assisted Living setting that may present behavior issues

- 🍃 Dementia
- 🍃 Depressive disorders
- 🍃 Anxiety disorders
- 🍃 Alcohol and drug-related disorders
- 🍃 Mild cognitive impairment



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Signs and Symptoms of Cognitive Impairment and Dementia

- ☞ Memory loss
- ☞ Difficulty performing familiar tasks
- ☞ Speech and language problems
- ☞ Disorientation to time and/or place
- ☞ Problems with reasoning, planning, organizing, judgement and problem-solving
- ☞ Misplacing things
- ☞ Difficulty with object recognition
- ☞ Changes in mood and/or behavior
- ☞ Changes in personality
- ☞ Loss of initiative



Source: www.alz.org

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Core Questions for evaluation

Are you addressing the Challenges?

- ☉ Are behaviors being managed effectively?
- ☉ Does the Service Plan *clearly* define individualized interventions?
- ☉ Have you involved the resident and sponsor in the Individualized Service Plan and/or Managed Risk planning?



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Common Triggers Which Contribute to Problem Behaviors

Internal Triggers

- ☒ Pain/physical discomfort
- ☒ Hunger
- ☒ Thirst
- ☒ Toileting needs
- ☒ Sensations/feelings
- ☒ Feeling tired
- ☒ Sensory deficits
- ☒ Emotions
- ☒ Fear
- ☒ Cognitive changes
- ☒ Underlying medical conditions

External Triggers

- ☒ Too much noise
- ☒ Lack of stimulation
- ☒ Too many people
- ☒ Chaotic environment
- ☒ Shift change
- ☒ New or unfamiliar staff
- ☒ Change in routine
- ☒ Change in daylight
- ☒ Demands to achieve beyond ability
- ☒ Approach used by staff, visitor, or other residents

Source: Cohn, Smyer, & Horgas



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Many Factors Interact to Cause Problem Behaviors

Consider...

- 🍃 Medical conditions
- 🍃 Overall physical well-being
- 🍃 Psychiatric/mental-health status
- 🍃 Sensory deficits
- 🍃 Medication side effects
- 🍃 Life history – childhood and adult experiences, relationships, family, career choice
- 🍃 Age, gender, culture, language, religion
- 🍃 Long-standing personality
- 🍃 Personal likes/dislikes
- 🍃 Values and beliefs



Assisted Living

☯ Assisted Living Care Philosophy

3 Key Principals

Choice; Dignity; Individuality



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Is Assisted Living the right fit? Admitting & Caring for Residents

- ❖ Important criteria to consider when assessing residents *prior* to move in
- ❖ What are the resident's/sponsor's expectations of care and services offered in the assisted living setting?
- ❖ Can you meet these expectations?



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Managing challenging behaviors in the Assisted Living Setting

- ☯ Be aware of YOUR verbal and non-verbal behaviors
- ☯ Use short simple directions
- ☯ Talk about topics of interest (old stories, songs, children)
- ☯ Be aware of resident's facial expressions/body language
- ☯ Check if the environment is too bright, busy or loud
- ☯ Provide alone time, away from distractions



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Managing Residents with Medical Issues and Co-existing Dementia and/or Mental Illness

- ☉ Provide ongoing staff education
- ☉ Evaluate whether activity programs are appropriate for the targeted population
- ☉ The physical environment should include wandering areas, access to safe/secure outdoor areas, Snoozelan Rooms and ample community space
- ☉ And consistent staff assignments (when possible)



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When is it time to re-evaluate the resident for a higher level of care?

- ☉ Are you safely managing resident behaviors?
- ☉ Know your admission/discharge Criteria



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The Value of Early Preparation

- 🌿 Families/Sponsors are your best allies when caring for the resident. *Establish trust.*
- 🌿 Communicate any changes in the resident's mood or behavior to the family and physician. Providing frequent updates helps avoid surprises!
- 🌿 Keep in mind the difference between “*alerting*” versus “*alarming*” the family. Present information with sensitivity and tact. Be honest.

Positive relations with families result in increased trust and improved collaboration.

Returning home; helping the Resident to Re-adjust to Assisted Living

- ☉ Anticipate challenges for the team
- ☉ Review care needs as if they were a new resident and update the Service Plan



Important Resources (review)

- ☉ Be proactive and prepared for emergencies.
- ☉ It is important to establish a professional relationship with the consulting psychiatrist at your facility.
- ☉ Become familiar with the mental-health care facilities in your area.
- ☉ Be prepared to answer families questions, such as:
 - *Where is the psychiatric facility?*
 - *What does it look like?*
 - *Are there dangerous patients on these units?*
 - *Can my loved one return back home to the Assisted Living program? And if not, where would they go?*



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Questions?



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References

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Cohn, M., Smyer, M., & Horgas, A. (1994). *The ABCs of behavior change: Skills for working with behavior problems in nursing Homes*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc.

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