

Before Choosing Medication to Treat Challenging Behaviours

Listen to the Resident

Consider whether the patient is experiencing:

- Hunger or thirst
- Pain or discomfort
- Fatigue
- Loneliness/fear
- Hearing/vision impairment
- Exacerbation of chronic illness
- Acute illness with delirium
- Urinary retention/constipation
- Medication side-effects
- Hallucinations/delusions
- Frustration related to mismatch between task and abilities
- Frustration related to communication challenges

DO

- ✓ Give your undivided attention
- ✓ Allow the person time to finish his or her thoughts
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions
- ✓ Go with the flow
- ✓ Be aware of the person's body language—what is it telling you?
- ✓ Think before you speak
- ✓ Avoid being judgmental
- ✓ Use restatement to clarify

DON'T

- ✗ Ignore the emotion behind the message
- ✗ Allow your attention to wander
- ✗ Finish sentences or "fill in the blanks"
- ✗ Dismiss concerns before exploring them
- ✗ Give false reassurances
- ✗ Jump to conclusions before you have heard the person out
- ✗ Make assumptions
- ✗ Offer unwanted advice
- ✗ Change the subject

Adapted from "Responding to Behaviours Due to Dementia," Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, 2010.