

## **IDEA! Strategy**

*IDEA!* is a simple three-step strategy to help you figure out *why* a challenging behavior is happening and how to deal with it.



### **Identify the problem/challenging behavior**

- What is the behavior that is challenging for you to deal with? Be specific. Can you see it?

### **Educate Yourself**

#### **Understand the cause of the behavior**

- **Health:** Is the person taking a new medication, getting sick, or in pain?
- **Environment:** Is it too noisy? Is it too hot? Is the place unfamiliar?
- **Task:** Is the task too hard? Are there too many steps? Is it something new?
- **Communication:** Is it hard for the person to speak or understand?

#### **Understand the meaning of the behavior to the person**

- Does the person feel like he/she is being treated like a child?
- Are there things that remind the person of something unhappy?
- Does the person feel a sense of insecurity, discomfort, or boredom?

### **Adapt**

**Try different things. Pay attention to the person's feelings.**

**Practice being calm, gentle, and reassuring.**

- Address the cause or triggers of the behavior by:
  - Keeping tasks and activities simple
  - Keeping the home as quiet and calm as possible
  - Speaking slowly and gently/trying not to say too much at one time
  - Not arguing/trying to comfort the person
  - Finding meaningful, simple activities so the person isn't bored
- Distract or redirect by:
  - Offering the person something he/she likes to eat
  - Watching a TV show or listen to music
  - Asking the person for his/her help with a simple activity
  - Leading the person to a different room