



Dementia and Realistic Expectations

- Dementia is an illness that affects all brain activity – how we think, how we speak, what we feel, and how we behave.
- Often, dementia gets worse over time and has at least 3 stages: early, middle, and advanced.
- Challenging dementia-related behaviors have meaning and purpose, and may reflect an attempt to communicate an underlying need.
- Residents with dementia can also experience anxiety and depression, which can also contribute to challenging behaviors. Anxiety and depression can be reduced!
- If we have realistic expectations of residents with dementia, it may be easier for us to “keep our cool” when we feel upset by difficult behaviors.
- STAR-VA teaches us to use strengths and skills to care for residents with dementia, reduce anxiety and depression, and improve care and quality of life.

Adapted with permission from Teri, L., Huda, P., Gibbons, L., Young, H., & van Leynseele, J. (2005). STAR: A dementia-specific training program for staff in assisted living residences. Gerontologist, 45, 686-693.



Communication is Key!

- Communication occurs with and without words.
- We communicate with our eyes, body, tone of voice, and facial expressions.
- The message we intend to send through our verbal and nonverbal communication is not always the message received.
- Communication can be an activator for a resident's behavior.
- Good communication in response to problem behaviors can reduce their severity and duration.
- Nonverbal messages may be accidental. Make sure you mean what your body is saying.
- STAR-VA reminds us to use **Practical Communication** strategies with residents.
- STAR-VA teaches us to “**Listen with Respect; Comfort and Redirect**” (LRCR)

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The ABC's of Dementia

- Challenging dementia-related behaviors can interfere with our ability to care for residents and their ability to enjoy life.
- Behaviors are observable events. We can describe them using the **four W's**:
 - **What** was the resident doing?
 - **Who** was present?
 - **Where** was this happening?
 - **When** was this happening?
- We can use the STAR-VA ABC Card to better understand behaviors and develop a plan:
 - **A - Activator**: What happened immediately before the resident's challenging behavior?
 - **B – Behavior**: (as above)
 - **C – Consequence**: What happened immediately after the resident's behavior?
- We then develop a **Get Active!** plan: How will we change the activator and consequences of the challenging behavior?

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Pleasant Events

- A pleasant event is anything that can add pleasure to a person's day
- Pleasant events are a key part of CLC goals of increasing individualized care and quality of life for residents
- Every interaction can be a pleasant event!
- Pleasant events are a way to help prevent challenging behaviors and to reverse depression and anxiety
- Pleasant events should be simple and easy to do
- STAR-VA provides tools to help identify pleasant events for each resident
- Family members can help to identify and implement pleasant activities for residents
- All CLC team members can help to implement pleasant events (e.g., nurses, recreation therapists, social workers, as well as volunteers and administrative staff)
- **Pleasant events are everyone's job!**

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