

What Behavior Communicates

Behavior of Concern	Underlying issues influencing the behavior	What the behavior may be communicating
<i>Note: These sample behavior issues do not include all information such as frequency or examples.</i>	<i>Note: These issues are designed to help with these examples and not intended to be a model of the issues present in all cases with the behavior listed.</i>	<i>Note: How to determine which is valid for this situation and/or this individual? A complete Behavior Assessment gives clues to narrow down the meaning.</i>
Raises voice, abrasive in tone of voice and word choices when making demands, requests, and trying to get needs met, clock watches while waiting, abrasive when demand is met.	Daily difficulties due to mild dementia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty waiting for needs to be met • Difficulty tracking passage of time Heightened sensitivity to pain Frequent anxiety	"I don't know that I can trust you to help me." "You don't care how long it takes to help me and you don't really care about me anyway." "You might forget about me." "It feels like I have been waiting forever."
Pacing, pleas for help, agitation. Copes with general agitation by approaching any Caregiver in the vicinity but then quickly seeks out another. Extreme expression of anxiety only quiets with one-on-one time and a soothing tone of voice.	Advanced dementia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to understand verbal information and follow directions from others. • Often confused and anxious • Unable to orient self to time and place • Experiences anxiety with any changes in daily routines. 	"I don't know where I am." "I can't remember why I am here. " "I don't know what's wrong but something is." "I don't know what I need." "I want to be reassured that I am safe here." "I am hungry (or thirsty) and can't remember how to ask. "
Ambulates without walker although balance is poor and falls frequent.	Poor memory skills to remember that a walker is necessary for walking	"I want to go over there and get that. What is this in my way?" (pushes walker out of the way) "I am fine. I'm only going to walk over there."
Refuses to get out of bed or get dressed. Won't respond to Caregivers that try to help.	Significant daily pain due to medical issues. Difficulty communicating needs.	"I hurt when I first get up in the morning." "I want this pain to go away and you go away at the same time."
Verbally abusive, yells, screams, calls Caregiver's negative names, curses them, refuses help with personal care.	History of living by self for many years. Dementia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't understand personal care needs. 	"I don't need a shower." "I don't know what you want from me. I am fine sitting here. Don't bother me."



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<p>Yells, talks faster, throws arms into the air, and moves body more quickly.</p>	<p>Difficulty with transitions Difficulty when approached quickly to start hygiene tasks.</p>	<p>“I hurt.” “I am experiencing PMS and feel rotten.” “What do you want now? You are always bothering me.” “I hate showers. I got hurt before. I’m afraid in the shower.”</p>
<p>Dominates interactions with others with uninterrupted talking and also interrupts when they try to talk. Talks about whatever is running through own mind.</p>	<p>Difficulty understanding social boundaries. Difficulty with impulse control.</p>	<p>“I want you to pay attention to me and I’m afraid you’ll walk away unless I keep talking.” “I’m lonely.” “I don’t know how to respond when you talk with me because what you aren’t making sense.”</p>
<p>Uses sexually inappropriate words and phrases with female Caregivers while they assist with personal care. Has also made unwanted sexual advances towards a female resident.</p>	<p>Dementia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with social boundaries. • Delusional 	<p>“I’m lonely.” “I’m embarrassed that I need help in personal care.” “I’m bored.” “I think that lady wants to be my girlfriend.”</p>
<p>Agitation during personal care- yells at staff “don’t touch me”, “leave me alone”, “I hate you”. Includes slapping, pinching and scratching.</p>	<p>Dementia with agitation Renal failure Edema causes legs to swell which causes leg pain to stand.</p>	<p>“I hate needing help to do the simplest things.” “I don’t want to get up now. I want to sleep.” “I want to take my shower when I want to. Don’t tell me when to take it.” “I want to decide what I’ll wear by myself.”</p>

