

Responsive/Expressive Behaviours

Strategies for Caregivers

Dementia is a condition of the brain that makes it harder to remember and think. The most common type of dementia is Alzheimer's disease.

With dementia, a person's intellect, memory, personality, and ability to communicate worsens over time. When a person with dementia is unable to use words to communicate or respond to something, they instead use **responsive or expressive behaviours**.

What are responsive or expressive behaviours?

Responsive or expressive behaviours refer to the actions, words, or gestures that a person with dementia uses in response to something negative, frustrating, or confusing in their environment. Some examples of responsive or expressive behaviours include pacing, grabbing onto people, cursing at others, or getting restless as the day ends.

All behaviours have a meaning. A person with dementia often uses responsive or expressive behaviours to communicate an unmet need.

What can I do to help my loved one with responsive or expressive behaviours?

The acronym **P.I.E.C.E.S.TM** can help you identify some of the needs that your loved one may be trying to express, and what you can do to help meet those needs.

P.I.E.C.E.S.TM stands for:

- P**hysical
- I**ntellectual
- E**mootional
- C**apabilities
- E**nvironmental
- S**ocial and Cultural Factors

If you feel the strategies on the next page still do not meet the needs of your loved one, please speak to a member of the healthcare team.

Where can I find more information?

**ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY OF
CANADA**

alzheimer.ca/en/help-support/im-caring-person-living-dementia/understanding-symptoms/changes-how-grief-pain-anger



Reference: Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. (2016). Delirium, Dementia, and Depression in Older Adults: Assessment and Care (2nd ed.) Toronto, ON: Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario.



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Unmet Needs	Strategies You Can Do to Help Meet the Need
<p>Physical</p> <p>Are they in pain? Hungry? Thirsty? Do they have any bathroom needs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer them food and drink. • Set up a regular toileting routine. • If they are in pain, give them a massage, reposition them, or give pain medicine, if needed.
<p>Intellectual</p> <p>Are they having a hard time communicating?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak slowly and use short sentences. • Use “yes/no” questions. • Maintain eye contact. • Allow plenty of time for them to respond. Do not interrupt. • If your loved one has false ideas or beliefs, do not try to confront or correct them, especially if the ideas/beliefs do not harm them or their surroundings.
<p>Emotional</p> <p>Are they feeling lonely? Distressed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for mood changes. • Support their emotions and feelings. • Validate their feelings.
<p>Capabilities</p> <p>Are they frustrated that they are unable to do some of the everyday things they used to be able to do to care for themselves?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make changes to the task so that they can do as much of it by themselves as possible. • Give them enough time to do the task. • If they are unable to finish the task, offer them help.
<p>Environmental</p> <p>Are they over- or under-stimulated? Has their daily routine been disturbed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the lighting and noise. • Get rid of the clutter in their surroundings. • Set a daily routine.
<p>Social and Cultural Factors</p> <p>Are they socially interacting with friends and family? Have their cultural needs been addressed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide social interactions, in person or virtually (via video calling), as often as possible. • Consider their cultural traditions or religious practices to create activities that have meaning for your loved one.

The P.I.E.C.E.S.™ acronym has been incorporated with permission from Hamilton, P., LeClair, J.K., Collins, J., Sturdy-Smith, C., O’Connell, M. PIECES Resource Guide: Guiding Collaborative Engagement, Shared Assessment, and Supportive Care. A Learning Resource for Health Care Practitioners Supporting Older Adults Living with Complexity (7th Ed.). Pieces Canada ©2020. Available from: <https://piecescanada.com>

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