

Australian version

iSupport For Dementia

Training and support manual
for carers of people with dementia



Unit 1. Introduction to person-centred care approach to changed behaviour

Why is this unit important?

People with dementia can have changed behaviour. These behaviours affect them, but can also be difficult for carers, like you.

How will this unit help me?

This learning unit helps you as a carer improve knowledge and skills to understand, prevent and manage changed behaviours.

What will I learn?

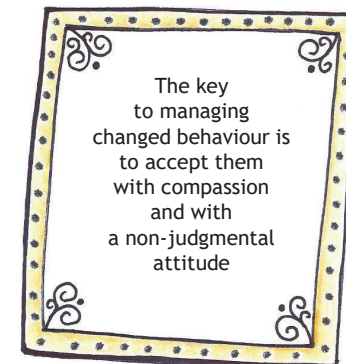
- The commonly identified changed behaviours among people with dementia
- Using the ABC approach to analyse, prevent and manage changed behaviour
- Using the person-centred approach to prevent and manage changed behaviours.


What is a changed behaviour?

Dementia will affect what a person thinks, how a person feels and what that person does. Behaviours, such as aggression, suspicion or wandering, are caused by damage to the brain, misunderstanding of their environment or inability to communicate their needs. They are not something your relative can control or prevent.

People with dementia, like the person, often have changes in their behaviours. Health professionals may use the term 'Behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia or BPSD' to describe changed behaviours.

The changed behaviour can be a source of distress both to the person with dementia, the carer, family members, friends and service providers.



Activity 

Pick any changed behaviour
*Does **the person** ever have one of the following behaviours?* Please click on any changed behaviour that you think **the person** may have.

Behaviour changes	Examples
<input type="checkbox"/> Aggression	Doing or saying something that makes you scared or frightened.
<input type="checkbox"/> Changes in mood or interest	Feeling sad, worried, frightened, frustrated or angry; being unusually emotional, crying, agitated or restless, withdrawn, unhappy, reacting slowly.
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty sleeping	Restless at night, waking you or other family members up.
<input type="checkbox"/> Delusions and hallucinations	Misinterpreting the world; having fixed false beliefs; things a person sees or hears that are not there.
<input type="checkbox"/> Walking and getting lost	Continually walking around; leaving the house and getting lost.
<input type="checkbox"/> Changes in judgement	Saying the wrong thing at the wrong time, acting inappropriately in a situation; not understanding own limitations; sexual and other socially inappropriate behaviours.

Changed behaviour

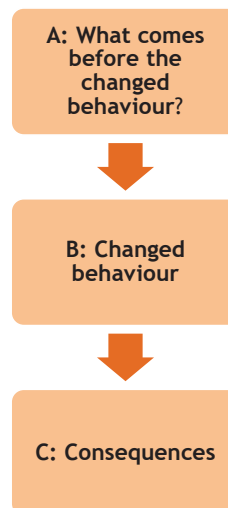
Many things can cause changes in behaviours. This may have a negative impact on your relationship with the person. It can even make you feel sad, angry, confused, or anxious. In some instances, you might even feel you 'can't handle' the behaviours.

Changed behaviours can have an impact on how you feel.

How to use the "ABC approach" (as shows in the boxes) to analyse changed behaviours

The three boxes on the right show the 'ABC approach'. You will need to recognise:

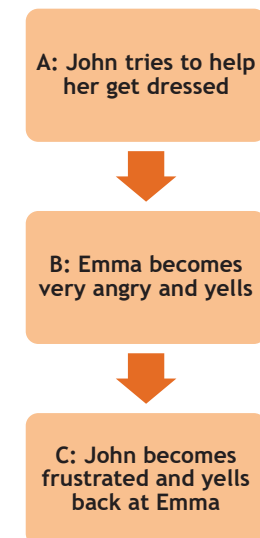
1. Antecedent (A): what comes before the behaviour;
2. Changed behaviour (B): changed behaviour the person with dementia demonstrates; and
3. Consequences (C): the impact of the changed behaviour on the carer.



Let us analyse an example

The three boxes on the right show what's happening. Emma has a diagnosis of dementia and is cared for by her husband, John. Emma appears to do very little and is staying in her pyjamas all day.

1. Antecedent (A): John tries to help Emma get dressed.
2. Changed behaviour (B): Emma becomes very angry and yells.
3. Consequences (C): John becomes frustrated and yells back at Emma.



Check your understanding



What are some of the things John could do differently?

Here are some responses, some are good, others are not. Please indicate what you think could be good responses. John could:

- ☐ Take a deep breath.
- ☐ Say to Emma that wearing pyjamas all day is not acceptable and insist Emma to get dressed.
- ☐ Remind himself that his wife has dementia, and the disease damages her judgement about what to wear appropriately during the day.
- ☐ Show two of Emma's favourite dresses and ask her to choose what she would like to wear.
- ☐ Accept Emma's choice to wearing pyjamas if she likes to do.

Check your understanding

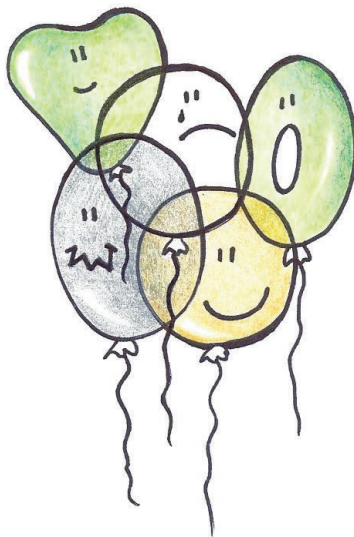


- ✓ **Take a deep breath.**
It shows that John is trying to calm down, if he calms down Emma might too.
- ✗ **Say to Emma that wearing pyjamas all day is not acceptable and insist Emma to get dressed.**
Forcing a person living with dementia to do something that they do not want will make the situation worse.
- ✓ **Remind himself that his wife has dementia and the disease damages her judgement about what to wear appropriately during the day.**
John recognises that Emma is living with dementia.
- ✓ **Show two of Emma's favourite dresses and ask her to choose what she would like to wear.**
This is a good response, because it shows that John includes Emma in decision making and respects Emma's choice.
- ✓ **Accept Emma's choice to wearing pyjamas if she likes to do.**
This is a good response, because wearing pyjamas all day has no harm to Emma.

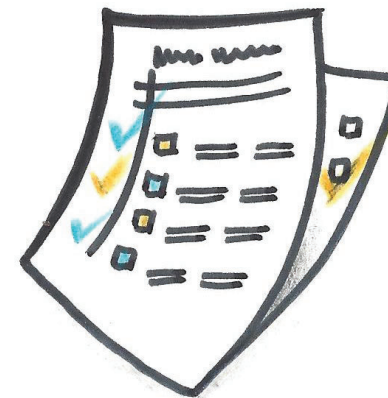
How to use person-centred care approach to prevent and manage changed behaviours?

The best way to understand person-centred care is to imagine being in the shoes of the person living with dementia; how would you like to be treated and how would you feel in the same situation. This care approach considers the needs and wishes of the person living with dementia when providing everyday care.

A changed behaviour is viewed as a way for the persons with dementia to express their unmet needs. Using person-centred care approach helps you meet the care needs of the person you care for and prevent changed behaviours.



Person-centred care helps you meet the care needs of the person you care for and prevents changed behaviours.



Let us analyse an example

Deborah lives with dementia and is cared for by her daughter, Linda. She likes cooking and always helps Linda to prepare meals for the family.

However, Deborah's condition has deteriorated recently. She misplaces things and breaks plates. Therefore, Linda decides not to have her mother around her in the kitchen. She tells Deborah to stay in the living room to watch TV while she is cooking.

Deborah becomes restless in the living room, walks to the kitchen many times and tries to help Linda with cooking. Linda becomes impatient and raises her voice and says 'Can you please stop doing this'!

Deborah becomes upset and yells back to Linda.

Check your understanding



What are some of the ways Linda could do differently?

Here are some responses, some are good, others are not. Please indicate what you think could be good responses. Linda could:

- ☐ Help Deborah stay in living room by closing the door so that she won't disturb Linda.
- ☐ Take a deep breath.
- ☐ Provide opportunities for Deborah to prepare meals that is safe for her to do, for example, setting a table in the dining room, that will provide Deborah with a sense of accomplishment.
- ☐ Set the environment up to simulate cooking experience for Deborah which helps to make her life meaningful and could potentially reduce the unmet needs.

Check your understanding



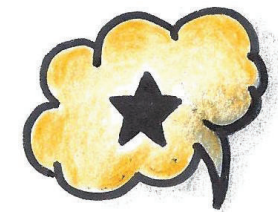
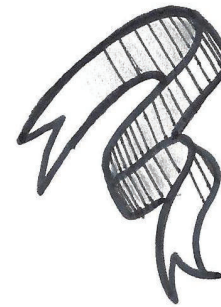
- ✗ **Help Deborah stay in living room by closing the door so that she won't disturb Linda.**
This practice does not reflect person-centred care and is seen as a restraint.
- ✓ **Take a deep breath.**
It shows that Linda is trying to calm down, if she calms down Deborah might too.
- ✓ **Provide opportunities for Deborah to prepare meals that is safe for her to do, for example, setting a table in the dining room, that will provide Deborah with a sense of accomplishment.**
This is good practice as it shows that Linda demonstrates an understanding of her mother's life experience.
- ✓ **Set the environment up to simulate cooking experience for Deborah which helps to make her life meaningful and could potentially reduce the unmet needs.**
This practice is good as it shows that Linda understands person-centred care.

Keep in Mind



When dealing with changed behaviour, keep the following in mind:

- Changed behaviours are common.
- Changed behaviours can be stressful for the person you care for and you.
- Try to make the person more comfortable.
- Look for ways to prevent or reduce changed behaviour, for example by using memory aids.
- Try to distract the person from the behaviour.
- Do not argue with the person.
- When one response or approach does not work, try another one.
- Realise there may be good and bad days.
- Consult your local doctor to identify any causes related to medications or illness.
- Identify whether the environment or your approach could be causing the changed behaviour.
- Try to identify what leads to the behaviour happening so that changes can be made.
- Remind yourself that changed behaviour can be part of the disease, but other possible causes should be identified before accepting the disease as a cause.



Here are some tips for related learning units:

- Don't blame yourself or the person you care for for the problems you encounter.
- Share your feelings about your experiences as a carer with others. If you keep them to yourself it may be more difficult for you to look after the person.
- It is essential that you make time for yourself. This will allow you to do the things you value in life, such as spending time with others or enjoying your favourite hobbies.
- Learn as much as you can to understand the behaviours and how to respond to them.

Tips



Useful resources

- **Dementia Australia**, <https://www.dementia.org.au/>
- The National Dementia Helpline is a free confidential phone and email information and support service. The Helpline number is 1800 100 500 and operates from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday excluding public holidays. A message service is available so if you call outside operating hours, you will get a call to you back the next working day.
- **Dementia Support Australia** <https://www.dementia.com.au/>
The Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (DBMAS) offers people with dementia and their carers support in managing behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, such as walking and getting lost and aggression. Contact them on 1800 699 799 (24 hours a day).
- **My Aged Care** <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au>
Carer support groups can sometimes be organised around specific caring roles and the situation of the person you care for. For information about these groups in your area visit the website or call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422.
- **Beyondblue** www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport
Learn more about anxiety and depression or to talk to someone call 1300 22 4636 (available 24 a day, 7 days a week)
- **Lifeline Crisis Support**
24 hour crisis support call 13 11 14.
Your local council may have resources to support you.

RELATED LEARNING UNITS

- Module 1 Unit 1 Introduction to dementia
- Module 2 Unit 4 Involving others
- Module 4 Unit 5 An enjoyable day
- Module 3 Unit 3 Thinking differently
- Module 3 Unit 2 Making time for pleasant activities





You finished this unit, well done!