



CONNECTING MINDS

DEMENTIA CARE NEWSLETTER

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The Role of Caring and Non-Caring Styles in Managing Responsive Behaviours

When interacting with people who have dementia, one of the most prevalent issues raised by staff working in long-term care, community agencies, or in an individual's home is the issue of how to respond to specific types of behaviours. "Challenging" or "disruptive" behaviours may result from dementia or other physiological processes and/or, may be due to environment, life circumstances, and /or interactions.

Understanding behaviours as responses to something negative or confusing in the person's environment or as a means of communication an unmet need –"responsive" behaviours-can help us to identify environmental and interactional sources and explore new ways of responding.

In a recent MAREP study the importance of staff members approach to responsive behaviour became clear. The "style" by which one approaches her job is viewed as a crucial factor in responding to responsive behaviours. A "caring" style was not only seen as an important way to prevent responsive behaviours but was also considered necessary in responding appropriately to behaviours. A "non-caring style" was determined to trigger responsive behaviours.

The differentiating factor between a caring and a non-caring style was the demonstrated level of respect for the resident as an individual and as a valued human being. Both caring and non-caring styles were centered around four areas:

- Voice and spoken word
- Body language
- Relational styles
- Being "with the person" vs. "with the task"

This MAREP research implies that organizational structure and systemic factors play an important role in the ability of staff to develop caring styles. Such obstacles might be staffing shortages, heavy workloads, and lack of time, all of which might pose significant challenges. At the centre of a caring style is a relationship centered approach. Relationships take time to develop and nurture, yet increasing demands on front-line staff and staff shortages limit that time.

Adopting caring styles, particularly by developing relationships with residents, can enhance staff's abilities to manage responsive behaviours and may also decrease the frequency and intensity of behaviours exhibited by residents. Our long-term care homes need to foster caring environments styles by addressing systemic factors, as well as supporting and enabling staff, hence facilitate staff to fully embrace caring styles.

Reference:

The Role of Caring and Non-Caring Styles in Managing Responsive Behaviours
By Elaine Wiersma and Sherry Dupuis MAREP- Kenneth G. Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program, University of Waterloo

Caring and Non-Caring Styles as Identified by Staff

CARING STYLE

NON-CARING STYLE

Caring through Voice and Spoken Language
 providing the resident with information;
 explaining what the staff member is doing
 simplify language and tasks; reducing the
 amount of information given
 using a calm, gentle tone of voice and
 manner

Caring through Body Language
 approaching the resident from the front
 getting down to the resident's eye level
 using physical affection/touch

Caring through Relational Styles
 building a close relationship
 seeing beyond the disease
 respecting and believing in continued
 autonomy and self-determination
 believing the person is "still there"
 knowing and respecting the resident's
 preferences and routines
 showing an interest in the resident
 really listening to the resident
 being patient

Caring through Being with the Person
 respecting and being able to move in the
 resident's reality
 moving with the resident's rhythms, slowing
 down
 being flexible in routines
 validating the resident's experiences
 being able to empathize with the resident

Non-Caring through Voice and Spoken Language
 using loud, bossy, authoritative tones and
 manners
 showing disagreement with the resident
 arguing with the resident
 abruptness in communication with residents

Non-Caring through Body Language
 using force in an attempt to get the resident
 to do what is wanted
 barging in on the resident

Non-Caring through Relational Styles
 being impatient
 showing disinterest/indifference toward the
 resident
 focusing on the disease process rather than
 the person behind the disease

Non-Caring through being with the Task
 focusing only on the task at hand
 hurrying and rushing care
 using a rigid approach to care
 trying to orient the resident to the staff's
 perception of reality

UPCOMING EVENTS — Making Tough Decisions in Dementia Care

Speaker Daniel Kuhn, MSW, Director, Professional Training Institute Alzheimer's Association will discuss how changes in an older family member's physical or cognitive functioning or in a caregiver's ability to provide care often requires families to make tough decisions. He will address driving, bringing outside help into the home, personal finances, long-term care, end-of-life options and self-care. This presentation is suitable for professional and non-professionals.

Thursday November 1, 1-4pm **There is no charge to attend but pre-registration is required.**
Holiday Inn, Brule Room **Call Alzheimer Society at 942-2195 to register and for details.**

RESOURCES

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www.u-first.ca U-First

www.alzheimer.ca Alzheimer Canada
www.marep.uwaterloo.ca

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