

Issues on aging

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FAST Member

The tragedy of man is what
dies inside himself while he
still lives.

-Albert Schweitzer

Objectives

- Identify various issues related to aged individuals
- Define Dementia
- Identify Signs of Alzheimer's Disease
- List strategies for intervention and prevention of Mood and Behavior Problems associated with Dementia
- State various ways to communicate with someone with Dementia

Mobility

- Ambulation
 - Unsteady gait
 - Difficulty walking
- Use of assistive devices
 - Canes
 - Walkers
 - Wheelchairs and ramp
 - Transfer boards, poles
 - Scooters
 - Bed canes
 - Seat Risers

Environment

- Space for walkers, wheelchairs, canes
- Grab bars for bathrooms; high toilet seats
- Rails for staircases/graduated slopes near entrances/exits
- Enhancing lighting in all entrances and staircases
- Trip Hazards
 - Extension cords
 - Carpets/rugs
 - Small cots/furniture
 - Shoe types (slippers)

Physical Health Issues

- Body Temperature/Personal Comfort
- Decreased circulation
- Lack of Exercise
- Tremors
- Chronic Illnesses

Visual Impairment

- Age related Macular Degeneration
 - progressive deterioration of a critical region of the retina called the macula
 - irreversible loss of central vision, but peripheral vision is intact
 - In the early stages, vision may be gray, hazy, or distorted
 - It is part of the aging process; 10 million Americans have some form of ARMD
- Spatial/depth Perception
- Cataracts
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Glaucoma
- If untreated can lead to:
 - Physical handicap
 - Increased occurrences of falls
 - Social isolation
 - depression

Hearing Impairment

- Seriously affects quality of life, personal safety, and the ability to function independently
- Limits the ability to interact socially
- Limits the ability to receive and interpret information
- Assistive technology can be very useful in assisting an individual with a hearing impairment
 - Do they have hearing aides?
 - FM Assistive listening devices
 - Signage

Activities of Daily Living

- Toileting
- Feeding
- Bathing and Dressing
- Transfer Status
- Cognition and Safety
- Basic Problem Solving

Other things to consider...

- Cultural Sensitivity
- Prejudices
 - People of Color
 - Generation Gap
 - Male Chauvinism
- Reliving History
 - Depression Era
 - War Veterans
- Denial that something is wrong!

Chronic Illness

- Arthritis
- Adult onset Diabetes or Type II
- Dementia: Parkinson's, Alzheimer's
- Chronic pain
- Kidney and Bladder Problems; Renal Failure
- Congestive Heart Failure
- Lung Disease:
 - COPD
 - Pneumonia...the number one cause of death in people with dementia

Other significant illnesses in the aged:

- Urinary Tract Infections
- Dehydration
- Frequent Falls
- Bed Sores/Ulcers

Medication Risks

- Can the resident identify what their medications are?
- How often do they take them?
- What side effects do we need to monitor?
- Do they have their medications with them?
- How do we obtain if they do not?

Quality of Life and Purpose

- Personal History
- Significant Losses

Dementia


- loss of mental ability severe enough to interfere with normal activities of daily living, lasting more than six months, not present since birth, and not associated with a loss or alteration of consciousness.
- Various types of Dementia
- leads to impairments in memory, reasoning, planning, and behavior

Alzheimer's Disease

- Most Common type of Dementia
- Affects 60-80% of all dementia cases
- More than half the cases are female

Signs of Alzheimer's

- Memory Loss that disrupts daily life
- Inability to plan or problem solve
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks
- Confusion to time and place
- Trouble with visual images
- Fragmented sentences, difficulty finding words
- Misplacing things and losing ability to retrace steps
- Poor judgment
- Withdrawal from daily routine
- Changes in mood and personality



**What are some
types of behaviors
or moods do you
see in someone
with Dementia?**

Nervousness/Anxiety

- Provide verbal and nonverbal reassurance
- Speak in a low tone of voice
- Keep instructions simple
- Play background music to soothe and comfort
- Decrease intake of caffeine
- Redirect to activities they prefer

Combativeness and Anger

- Identify triggers
- Try to break tasks into simple steps and walk the person through each step to avoid frustration
- Stay calm and do not rush the resident or yourself!
- Make all effort to understand what the resident is saying or asking
- Avoid noisy, crowded, unfamiliar environments
- Make sure the patient gets adequate rest and is feeling well before doing any activities
- Avoid audiences when a resident is enraged
- **NEVER NEVER NEVER ARGUE WITH AN ANGRY PERSON!**

How do you communicate with someone with Dementia?

- Take your time. Do not rush
- Lower the distraction level
- Ask yes-no questions
- If he/she stops talking mid sentence, calmly repeat what they just said
- Make sure you understand what they just said, repeat
- Take note of body language
- Make sure assistive devices are correct
- Always address the person by name often
- Maintain eye contact
- Gently touch the hand, arm, shoulder
- Speak clearly and distinctively
- Be as specific as possible

Using Memory Aids

- Write out instructions
- Labeling
- keep environment clutter-free
- Develop a routine, write it down
- Use large highly visible wall calendar
- Make a place to write upcoming activities

Reminiscence Techniques

- Ask questions about the past that prompt them to elaborate
- Follow up with additional questions
- Encourage him/her to discuss past achievements, talents, skills
- Acknowledge and validate his/her feelings
- Be an active listener
- Use cues like photographs, foods, old songs, or music to assist with recall
- Bring up specific events and dates from the past like anniversaries, birthdays, etc



Questions/Comments