Mental Health Ombudsman Training Manual

Advocacy and the Adult Home Resident

MODULE III

Challenging Behaviors

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Objectives: Part One

- Describe principles of communication
- Describe behavior as communication
- Identify factors → difficult behaviors
Objectives: Part Two

- Describe common challenging behaviors
- Describe strategies
About communication

- 10% is through words or speech
- 40% is through the tone of voice
- 50% is through body language
About communication

- **Thinking:** 1,000 - 2,000 wpm
- **Speaking:** 100-400wpm
- **Remembering:** <25%
About communication

- Try to understand
- Be open-minded
- Stand in the other’s shoes
About communication

- EMPATHY
- SELF KNOWLEDGE
- ACTIVE LISTENING
Communication obstacles

- Personal problems
- Emotional state
  - Anger
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Paranoia
- Sensory deficits
- Cognitive deficits
  - Hallucinations
  - Thought disorder
Communication obstacles

- Interferences
- Environmental noise
- Lack of privacy
- Lack of perceived power
About Behavior

- All behavior has meaning

- Attempt to communicate
  - Need or feeling

- Effect a change
  - Start or stop
About Behavior

"What needs to change?"

- Environment
- My behavior or attitude
- The resident's behavior
Advocacy and the Adult Home Resident

Challenging Behaviors
Part Two
Adult Home Setting

Loss

- of control - decision - making
- of independence
- of autonomy - choices
- of identity
Common Behaviors

- Rummaging, Pillaging, Hoarding
- Wandering
- Irritability
- Delusions
- Hallucinations
- Agitation
- Lack of cooperation

- Paranoia
- Socially unaware behavior
- Aggression
- Sexual activity
- Accusatory behavior
- Anxiety
Common Behaviors

- Depression
- Social withdrawal, apathy
Understanding Behavior

- What is the communication?
- What needs to change?
- Is it a problem?

- Whose problem is it?
  - Mine
  - Resident’s
  - Administrator
  - Family
  - Regulatory agency
Agitation

- Slapping thighs
- Clapping
- Yelling
- Screaming

Self-referred
- Something is wrong with *me*
- Do something!
Agitation

- Individuals with
  - Dementia
  - Delirium
  - Stroke
  - Developmental disability
  - Brain injury
  - Agitated depression
Agitation

- Common causes
  - Noisy environment
  - Pain
  - Constipation
  - Discomfort
  - Infection
  - Drugs
  - Hearing loss

- Make sense of the communication
- Offer reassurance
- Address the underlying problem
Aggression

- Hitting out
- Kicking
- Pinching
- Biting
- Threatening
- Swearing

- Other referred
- Something is wrong with you
- STOP! Leave me alone
Aggression

Individually with:
- Dementia
- Delirium
- Stroke
- Paranoia
- Delusions of persecution
- Developmental disability
- Brain injury
- Intoxication
Aggression

Common causes

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Frustration
- Medications
- Sensory loss
- Crowded or noisy environments
- Abrupt, tense or impatient staff
What helps?

- Make sense of the communication
- Stop doing what you're doing
- Back away
- Stay calm
- Communicate in soft, low voice
- Address the underlying problem
Isolation

- Paranoia
- Sensory loss
- Depression
- Substance Abuse
- Personality
Communication skills

- Talking to residents who have
  - Depression
  - Psychosis
  - Difficult personalities
  - PTSD
  - Substance Abuse Disorders
  - Severe Anxiety
Communication skills

Talking with residents who are:
- Intoxicated
- Dealing drugs
- Hallucinating
- Not making sense
- Engaging in prostitution

- Verbally abusive
- Exploiting others
- Anxious around other people
- Difficulty organizing thoughts
Set the stage

Consider
- sensory deficits
- level of understanding

Commit to listening
- allow time
- be patient
- private
- quiet

Face-to-face
- perceived lack of power
- fear, anger sadness

Tone, posture, gestures
- Communicate respect
Communication skills
Depression

What helps

- Active listening
- Empathy/Hope
  - “I know you feel this way now, but you won’t always”
- Engage
  - “Come to ____________ with me today”
Communication skills
Depression

What doesn’t

- False cheer
  - “It’s not so bad”
  - “Cheer up”

- Personal philosophy
  - “There are people here worse off than you”
Communication skills

Schizophrenia

- Be patient
- Signal confidence in recovery
- Maintain attitude of hopefulness
- Listen actively
Communication skills

Fearfulness

- Do not use gestures which threaten
- Take care with touch
Communication skills

Drug use

- Zero tolerance
- Undermines treatment
- Risk of exploitation
- Advocate for treatment