

This guide explains the **behavior problems associated with dementia** and provides **suggestions for managing these behaviors**.

<p>Why do difficult behaviors occur?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical discomfort caused by an illness or medications. ▪ Over stimulation from a loud or overactive environment. ▪ Frustration caused by difficulty completing simple activities. ▪ Inability to communicate effectively. ▪ The person may be hungry, thirsty, or bored. 	
<p>Understand the problem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be aware of place and time behaviors occur. ▪ Is the behavior harmful to the individual or others? ▪ What happened before the behavior occurred? ▪ Did something cause the behavior? 	
<p>Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eliminate distractions. ▪ Use short and simple sentences. “Jane, please sit in this chair.” ▪ Give one direction at a time. ▪ Use gestures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoid negative statements. ▪ Avoid talking down to your loved one. ▪ Do not correct loved one. ▪ Offer simple, specific choices. “Do you want milk or juice?”
<p>Wandering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change locks on doors. ▪ Use child safety locks. ▪ Use an identification bracelet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alert neighbors about the wandering behavior. ▪ Allow for regular exercise to minimize restlessness.
<p>Incontinence (toileting)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a routine. ▪ Make a bathroom door sign with a picture of a toilet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide easy to remove clothing. ▪ Schedule liquid intake to prevent dehydration.
<p>Anger/ Agitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May indicate need or desire for something (food, water etc.) ▪ Reduce outside noise and clutter. ▪ Try a gentle touch, calm music, reading, or walks. 	

Repetitive speech and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reassure or try to distract the person. ▪ Learn to recognize certain behaviors that may indicate need or desire for something. 	
Paranoia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Check medications, this could be side-effect. ▪ Avoid arguing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respond to the <i>feelings</i> behind the accusations. ▪ Use non-verbal reassurances such as a touch or hug.
Traveling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reassure the person. ▪ Allow plenty of time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bring another adult to help. ▪ Bring something to keep the confused person occupied if you must wait.
Bathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Realize you can skip a day. ▪ Choose a relaxed time of day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set a routine. ▪ Prepare and layout bathing items in advance.
Appetite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Love one may not remember they have just eaten. ▪ Keep food out-of-sight during non-meal times. 	
Dressing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Choose loose-fitting clothes with snaps or zippers. ▪ Lay out one article or clothing at a time or in order of dressing. ▪ Don't argue if the person insists on wearing the same outfit again – buy more than one of the same outfit. 	
Sleeping through the night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make sure the person isn't hungry. ▪ Prevent day time napping. ▪ A long afternoon walk may help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have a bedtime routine. ▪ Eliminate alcohol & avoid caffeine. ▪ Use the bathroom before bed.
Extra Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Redirect or distract the difficult behavior. When possible, ignore it. ▪ Accept behaviors that are not dangerous – like eating with fingers. ▪ Take care of YOURSELF! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer lots of praise and hugs. ▪ Modify hobbies: a knitter can wind yarn; a woodworker can sand wood. ▪ Set routines.
Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center: Central LA (213) 740-1376 Southeast LA (562) 469-6255		http://www.usc.edu/lacrc San Gabriel Valley (626) 814-3334 Antelope & Santa Clarita Valley (661) 945-4852