

Caregiver Assistance News

“Caring for You - Caring for Others”

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,
Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**



APRIL 2023

Abuse and Neglect

People with dementia are especially vulnerable to mistreatment, partly because caring for them can place so much stress on those who provide care. If you don't understand the reason for the behavior, you may misinterpret it as hostile to you, rather than caused by their illness. Understanding the disease, knowing how best to communicate with a person with dementia, and having adequate support for yourself can go a long way toward preventing these very upsetting situations.



A person with Alzheimer's disease may sometimes act in ways that are upsetting or seem aggressive. He or she may hit, scratch, or fight with the caregiver. This does not always happen; but, if it does, it is likely to be when the person is in the middle stage of Alzheimer's disease. This stage can last for up to four years.

These actions can be upsetting and are often hard for caregivers to manage. It helps to have a plan. One that many people find easy to remember is called ABC. Here is what this means:

A means Antecedent. This refers to events that happen just before an upsetting action.

B is the Behavior. This means any upsetting or aggressive action by the person who has Alzheimer's disease.

C refers to the Consequence. This includes events that happen after the behavior. Sometimes, these events can make the situation worse.

Here is a story about people we are calling "Mary and Robert Jones". In this story, Mary is the caregiver for her husband, Robert, who has Alzheimer's disease. As you will see, in this story many things go wrong.

A. The Antecedent. What happened before the behavior?

Mary slept too late and now is in a hurry. She wants her husband, Robert, to quickly get out of bed, take a shower, eat, and get dressed before a driver arrives to take them to his doctor's appointment. Because of her late start, Mary yanks off the bed covers and yells at Robert to get up. He does not understand the words but reacts to her tone of voice. Mary gets angry when he pulls the bed covers back up. "So that's the way it will be. I'm in charge here," she yells.

Mary then drags Robert out of bed and rushes to get him dressed. Now he must balance on one leg rather than sit down to pull up his pants. This is not their usual routine when Mary takes her time helping Robert get ready for the day.

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B. The Behavior.

Robert loses his balance because Mary is rushing him so much. He grabs her arm for support and does not let go. When she yells, he grabs even tighter. Robert is now digging his nails into Mary's arm.

C. The Consequence. The events that followed the behavior

Mary loses control and smacks Robert in the face (something she had never done before). He hits her back. Mary thinks he is fighting, though it may be that he is just afraid and doing to her what she did to him. One problem leads to others and Mary now worries that Robert will hurt her again. She questions whether she can care for him at home and wonders whether Robert must go to a nursing home.

Now let's look again at this story using the ABC way. Mary can see that the problems started when she rushed around and did not think of how Robert would react. She now knows she must avoid these types of situations.

- Mary learned that because Robert has Alzheimer's disease, he cannot be rushed. While she should not feel guilty, she should realize how her actions made this worse.
- If Mary is ever late again, she will call the doctor's office and ask if they can make a new appointment or come in later in the day. This is better than expecting Robert to change his behavior.
- Mary will make a list of what happened just before Robert's upsetting behavior. She will look for causes of what went wrong and figure out ways to avoid them.
- Mary will also think about her own actions and what did or did not work well.
- Mary will use the ABC way to help Robert to be more cooperative in the future. This is a way to understand what happened and figure out ways to better manage in the future.

Source: *The Comfort of Home for Alzheimer's Disease*

Sleep Disturbances

Changes in the brain can alter the sleep patterns of people with dementia. Having a daily schedule with enough activity and periods of rest, avoiding caffeine in the later part of the day, and sticking to a regular time for going to bed may help. Sleep medications should be used only as a last resort. Discuss with the doctor before using them. Sometimes, the person with Alzheimer's disease will want to sleep in the clothes they have worn during the day, and they may prefer to sleep in a comfortable chair in the living room instead of in bed. If there is no harm in going along with these behaviors, do not make an issue about them. Be sure that the house is securely locked so that if the person wakes up and wants to go outside during the night, they cannot do so.



Memory Care

Alcohol

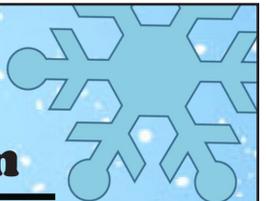
Individuals with moderate dementia may not remember how much they drank and may inadvertently partake in heavy drinking without even realizing it.

HEAP Home Energy Assistance Program

Now open for applications for 2022-2023.

This program can help eligible Ohioans manage their heating bills. Applications are available from your local Community Action Agency

If interested or if you have questions, contact your county Community Action Agency or the AAA7 Resource Center at 1-800-582-7277.



Taking Care of Yourself

Self-Neglect

Neglect is defined as providing inadequate food, water, clothing, shelter, or help with personal hygiene and health care; however, self-neglect is one of the most frequently reported concerns brought to adult protective services. Oftentimes, the problem is paired with declining health, isolation, Alzheimer’s or dementia, or drug and alcohol dependency.



Self-neglect can include behaviors such as:

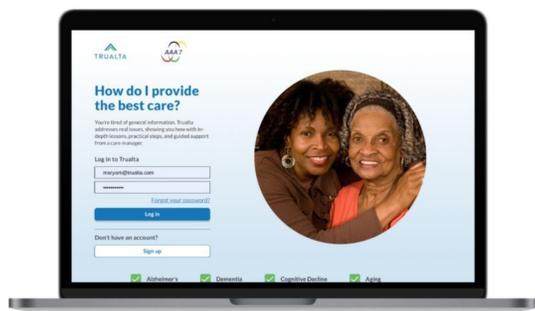
- Hoarding of objects, newspapers, mail, etc., or animal hoarding to the extent that the safety of the person is threatened. Inability to attend to housekeeping.
- Failure to provide adequate food and nutrition for oneself and to take essential medications or refusal to seek medical treatment for serious illness.
- Poor hygiene or not wearing suitable clothing for the weather.

Source: National Center on Elder Abuse

2023 Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program

Applications now available! Eligible seniors can receive \$50 in coupons to use with participating farmers in the Program. If you have participated in the past, you must re-apply each year. For more information, call the AAA7 Farmers Market Nutrition Program hotline at **1-800-343-8112** or e-mail **farmersmarket@aaa7.org**.

Trualta helps families learn skills to manage care at home, provided for free by AAA7



- You can register today to access an **interactive eLearning environment**
- Short, quick lessons created by experts in aging
- Easy to use for all ages, completely private and **accessible 24/7**
- **No app required**, view on any browser, laptop, phone or tablet

The AAA7 is excited to offer this interactive opportunity to caregivers to support them in their caregiving role at no charge!

Sign up today!

aaa7.trualta.com



Steps to Avoid Injury

Don't try to restrain the person with Alzheimer's disease (AD). This could cause serious injury to both of you.

1. Get out of striking distance. Step away so that they cannot reach you.
2. Call for help if you need it. You can call a friend, family member, or neighbor to help you calm the person down. You can also call 911 or your local emergency number.
3. Try to avoid creating a situation in which the person with AD will feel threatened because this will only make them more upset. When things have calmed down, figure out what has set the person off using the ABC method on pages 1-2.

What seems like violent behavior may be the way this person is responding to changes in their brain or to events that they do not understand and interpret as dangerous in some way. These might be an unfamiliar person entering the room, attempts to take something away from them, or fear of being hurt.

Some content in this publication is excerpted from The Comfort of Home: Caregivers Series. It is for informational use and not health advice. It is not meant to replace medical care but to supplement it. The publisher assumes no liability with respect to the accuracy, completeness or application of information presented, or the reader's misunderstanding of the text.



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Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs.

The Agency can also be reached via e-mail at info@aaa7.org.