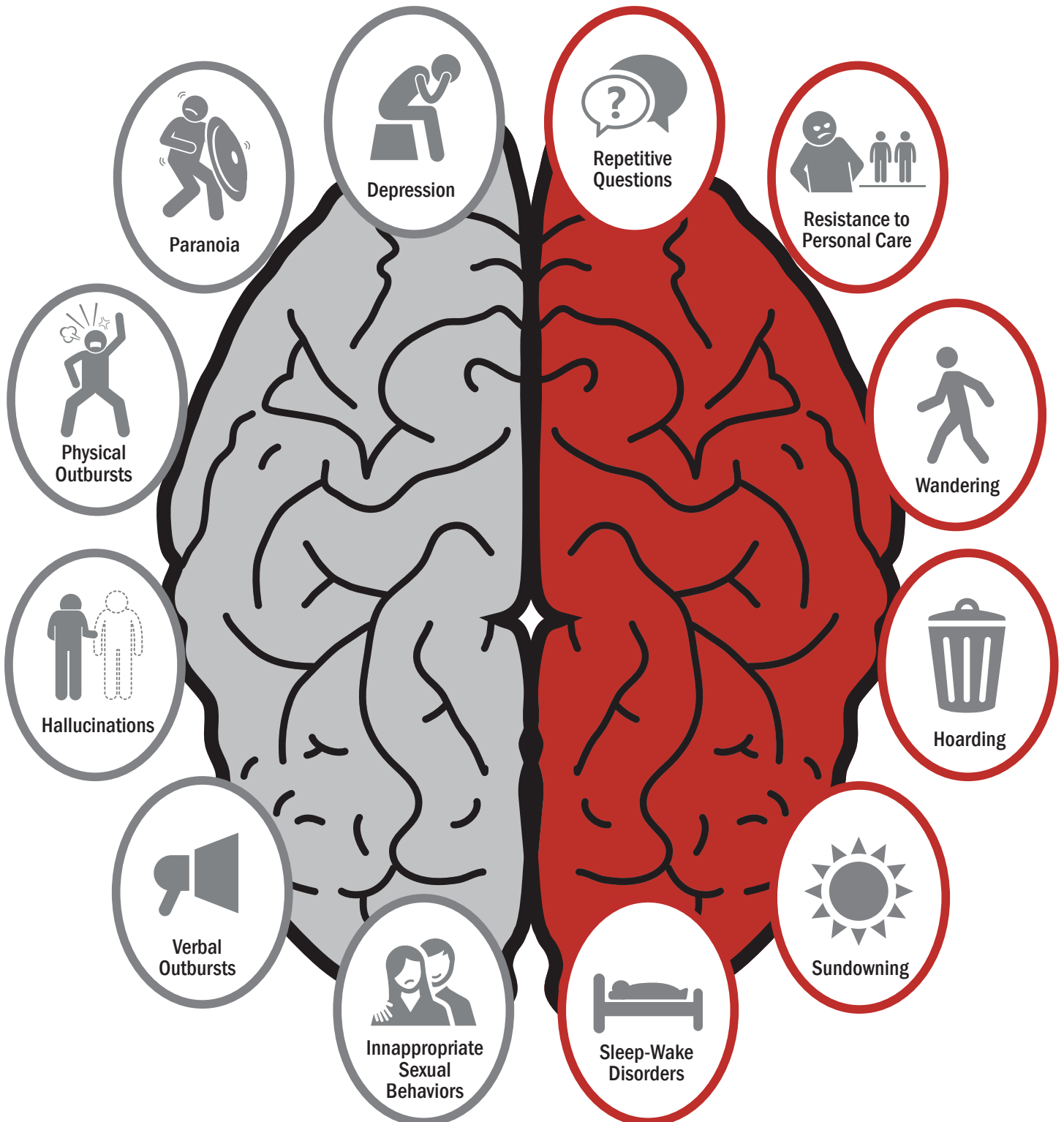




COMMON BEHAVIORS IN DEMENTIA

Behaviors are communication
All behaviors have meaning



HELPFUL TIPS FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS



Change your communication

Difficult behaviors cannot be changed with words

Change your approach to the person, reaction to their behavior, and/or change their environment. • Individuals with dementia often times have impairments in short term memory as well as an inability to learn new information. • They cannot be told to do, or not do something and be expected to remember. • But it is important to make sure you have their attention. • Use short sentences with yes/no answers. • If necessary, distract and redirect.

Don't say "No" and never argue

You cannot reason with a person who has lost the intellectual ability to process thoughts in a logical and rational manner. • Arguing will encourage frustration, fear, and anger. • Your goal is not to be "correct" or "right". • The person is experiencing a decline in their reasoning skills at the same time they are experiencing an increase in their emotional reactions. • Feelings are more important than facts. • Loud voice can be interpreted as angry. • Stay calm. • Step away and try again in a few minutes. • Allow time.

It's their reality and you must enter it

- ✓ Validation – builds empathy and creates a sense of trust and security that reduces anxiety. Enter their reality and reminisce with them. Match their emotions. Loud voice can be interpreted as angry.

Reduce fear by acknowledging underlying emotions

- ✓ Empathize – as the disease progresses the person loses their ability to express and cope with their fears. A person with dementia cannot "self soothe" if their fears become overwhelming. Reassure the person and respond to their emotion.

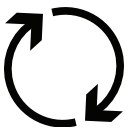
Repetitive Questions – Answer but maybe answer differently each time and/or redirect them to a different subject. • Make it fun! "Are we going?" Give them 5 cards or 5 objects. Each time they ask take away the card or object. Remind them when they have no cards/objects it will be time to go.

Verbal Outbursts/Physical - Behaviors do not come out of the blue. Stay calm, do not shout or initiate physical contact, reassure, make eye contact and identify the trigger. Document behaviors and triggers.

Inappropriate sexual expression/resistance to personal care – What is the trigger? Clothing issue? Pain? UTI? Vaginitis? Constipated? Some people are not used to others being in the bathroom with them.

Paranoia/Hallucinations/Delusions- Audio or vision issues? Impact in ear canal? Cataracts? Make sure to rule out treatable issues. Live in their world. Help them look. Distract if necessary. "There's a fireman outside my window". "Let's go see if we can help him". Or possibly close the curtain.

Sleep-Wake Disorders - Is this treatable? Is it sleep apnea?



Change the environment

Sundowning – Increase full-spectrum lighting especially between 3-6pm (before dark). Reduce stimuli and confusion. Close curtains to reduce shadows and reflections. Try to increase supports during transition times. Stick to routines. Minimize stress with quiet music. Provide light meal for dinner. Also, offer regular breaks/naps throughout the day. The #1 reason for behaviors happening is fatigue.

Wandering – Assume the environment is always new to the person. Keep landmarks the same as much as possible. Do not prevent movement. Create safe spaces with snack and drinks. Disguise doorknobs and locks. Have meaningful activities including dancing, music, and exercise.

Rummaging/Hoarding – Organize but don't remove. These are often items the person cherishes. Create rummage boxes.

Dementia alters visual perception – can't shut out other stimuli:

- Adults with I/DD may already have been compromised
- "lost in space" – help with cues like placemats on the table or pictures on door
- Bathrooms often white on white – need contrasting colors
- Keep landmarks the same – arrows to the bathroom
- Colors may appear differently, glare sensitivity, black & white tiles or "busy" carpet
- Visual field about 3' from floor
- Food – one food at a time – don't load plate with all and use contrasting colors and easy to use utensils