INTRODUCTION

Please use this Facilitator’s Guide with the May 2014 issue of Nursing Assistant Monthly on wandering.

An estimated 60 percent of people with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia will wander at some point during the course of their disease. While this behavior is challenging to manage, CNAs can play a crucial role by helping to notice behavior patterns and ensuring that residents’ physical and emotional needs are met.

CONTINUING EDUCATION GOALS

1. To learn the basic types of wandering behavior and the factors that can trigger wandering. Residents with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia wander as a result of changes in the brain. Researchers have classified wandering into four categories. Understanding these patterns can provide hints about how to meet these residents’ needs.

2. To learn the CNA’s role in caring for a resident who wanders. The CNA’s primary role is to keep residents safe and ensure their basic needs, such as nourishment and toileting, are met. CNAs are in a unique position to notice patterns and triggers in a resident’s wandering behavior that can guide interventions.

3. To understand that wandering residents are often trying to communicate a physical or emotional need. Many residents who wander have lost the ability to communicate through language. They may be wandering because they need toileting or are hungry, thirsty, in pain, or lonely.
IN-SERVICE TRAINING IDEAS

1. Give CNAs an overview of the topic by using the slides provided on our website: http://solutions.cengage.com/nursing-assistant-monthly/. At the log in, the user name is NAM, the password is Trainer. (Remember that these slides are available to those without Internet access by calling us at 1-800-348-0605.) Be sure that CNAs understand the key points by involving them in discussions.

2. Conduct a case review of one or more residents in your facility who exhibit wandering behavior. Review their care plans and the rationale for each component of care, particularly those that involve the CNA.

3. Review your facility’s prevention and emergency policies with regard to elopement. Be sure to identify the CNA’s role when a resident wanders away from the facility.

4. Discuss potential triggers of wandering behavior. Ask participants to share their experiences with caring for residents who wander. Can they identify possible precipitating factors for the behavior in specific residents?

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Web-Based Resources

Alzheimer’s Association
http://www.alz.org
Offers a wealth of information on topics pertaining to Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders.

National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners
http://www.nccdp.org
An organization dedicated to educating health care professionals, front line staff, and First Responders in how to care for people with dementia.

Books and Journals


The following questions are based on the May 2014 issue of Nursing Assistant Monthly.
Once you’ve read the issue, please answer the questions below, sign your name, and return this quiz to your supervisor.

1. True or false?
   It is essential to stop a resident from wandering, even if he is content and his needs are met.
   ☐ True
   ☐ False

2. A resident who wanders might be trying to communicate that he is:
   a. hungry.
   b. lonely.
   c. bored.
   d. needing to use the bathroom.
   e. All of the above

3. People who wander have special needs, including:
   a. properly fitted footwear.
   b. snacks and drinks between meals to ensure adequate nutrition and hydration.
   c. regular checks of their whereabouts.
   d. regular assistance with basic needs such as toileting.
   e. All of the above

4. Fill in the blank.
   A resident with dementia wanders out of your facility alone and unsupervised, and makes his way down the street to a local store. This is called _____________.

5. True or false?
   A marked increase in wandering can be a sign of a serious physical problem.
   ☐ True
   ☐ False

6. Fill in the blank.
   ____________ means to walk around the same loop repetitively.
ANSWERS TO QUIZ—MAY 2014

1. False. See lead article, page 1.
2. e. See lead article, page 1.
3. e. See Expert Interview, page 2.
4. Elopement. See lead article, page 1.

UPCOMING ISSUES OF NURSING ASSISTANT MONTHLY

June 2014  Welcoming a new CNA
July 2014  Skin care: Tips for the caregiver
August 2014  Vision loss: New approaches

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Dear Colleague,

Wandering is one of the most mystifying behaviors associated with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Approximately 60 percent of people with Alzheimer's disease wander, making it a significant challenge for family and professional caregivers, and often for the wanderers themselves.

As our understanding of dementia grows, so does our understanding of its manifestations. For example, we now understand that wandering can be an acceptable outlet for boredom or stress, and is often an attempt to communicate a physical or emotional need. The behavior may also threaten a resident's health and safety if it becomes excessive or if the person elopes from the facility.

We are happy to present an interview with Donna Algase, PhD, RN, whose research on wandering has led to a greater understanding of this behavior, and better ways to meet the needs of residents who wander.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Nursing Assistant Monthly. As always, I welcome your comments on this issue and suggestions for future topics.

Best wishes,

Sheri Hall
Editor