Understanding and responding to distressed behaviour

Professor June Andrews

www.dementia.stir.ac.uk
Who are the DSDC?

• Independent and authoritative
• Been working in dementia for 25 years
• Work all over the UK and the world
• Called in when people are in trouble
• Non-profit and supported by charity
• Based on research evidence
• Highly experienced teams
Who is June Andrews!
What is the problem in dementia?

- Impairment of memory
- Impairment of reasoning
- Impairment of learning
- Increase of stress
- The normal changes of ageing but at the same time as a reduced capacity to deal with them
The “leaf model” – what keeps people with dementia above the line?

Care at home
Institutional care
Acute Hospital
Outline for today

• What is dementia?
• Stress and distress – how can staff cause this?
• Understanding distress – what do they want?
• Causes of distress
• Communication
• Assessment
• Legal and ethical issues
• Professional care
What is dementia?

• Not much about this for today
• Everyone’s experience is different
• Knowing how particular illnesses impact the brain is crucial, so you need to look at this sometime
Stress and distress

- Stress can quickly develop into distressing behaviour
- The importance of understanding emotions
- How you can step into someone else’s world
- The importance of understanding their beliefs and thoughts
Understanding distress

- The 1980’s Kitwood model for understanding distress
- Implications of distress for health and wellbeing
Causes of distress

- Ageing senses
- Delirium
- Depression
- Pain
- Medication
- Environment
Communication

• Be genuine, smile and make a connection
• Speak clearly
• Step into the person’s world
• Listen, and be open minded
• Ask questions that are clear and need yes/no
• Find compromise
• Allow time
• Mirror non verbals with what you say
• Use touch appropriately
• Respect personal space
Communication errors

• Ignoring in case you make it worse
• Forcing them into your reality
• Judging or arguing
• Going fast
• Talking over or finishing sentences
• Making promises you cannot keep or do not intend to keep
• Punishing the person
• Being condescending
Assessment

• Use the ABC analysis
  ▪ Antecedent
  ▪ Behaviour
  ▪ Consequence
Practical strategies that may or may not work

- Reality orientation
- Validation
- Reminiscence, and life story work
- Art, music, dance, drama
- Multisensory work
- Cognitive stimulation or training
- Exercise
- Any form of distraction
Legal and ethical issues

- Complex but discussing restraint
- High risk
- Alternatives
Professional care

- Documentation
- Taking care of yourself and relatives
- Staff training
• http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/education/training-directory/behaviour-understanding
Training and Study Guide

Supporting people with dementia: understanding and responding to distressed behaviour
Out this month. Dementia; the one-stop guide by Professor June Andrews.
A guide for professionals and carers
Thank you!!

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