



NC Department of Health and Human Services

# NC Home Care Aide Curriculum

## Module 20 – Understanding Challenging Behaviors

July 2021

# OBJECTIVES

- 1. Identify key concepts in aging related to challenging behaviors**
- 2. Explain triggers to challenging behaviors**
- 3. Discuss effective communication and problem solving as related to challenging behaviors**
- 4. Define the home care aide's role in working with angry, combative, or agitated patients**

# Leading Longer and Healthier Lives

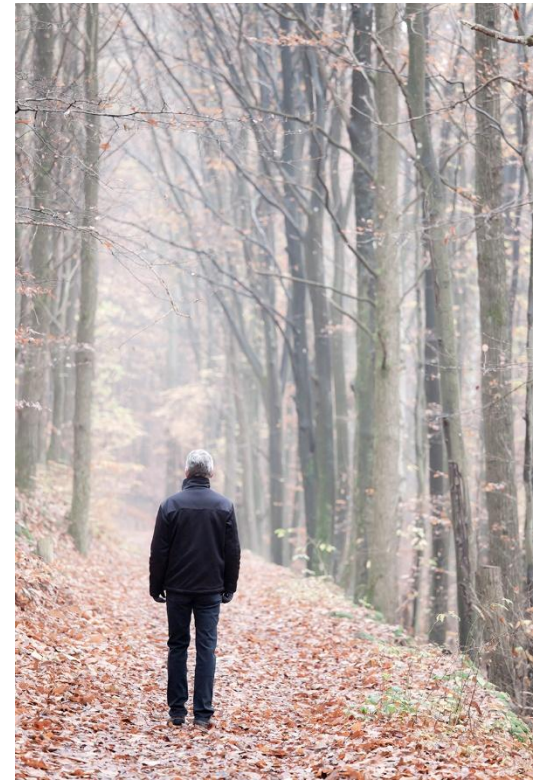
- **According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were more than 54 million U.S. citizens 65 years and older in 2019.**



# Development Tasks for the Older Adult

**Developmental tasks involve:**

- **Physical and/or health issues**
- **Retiring/living on a fixed income**
- **The death of loved ones**
- **Possibly moving and/or making new friends**
- **One's own life and death**



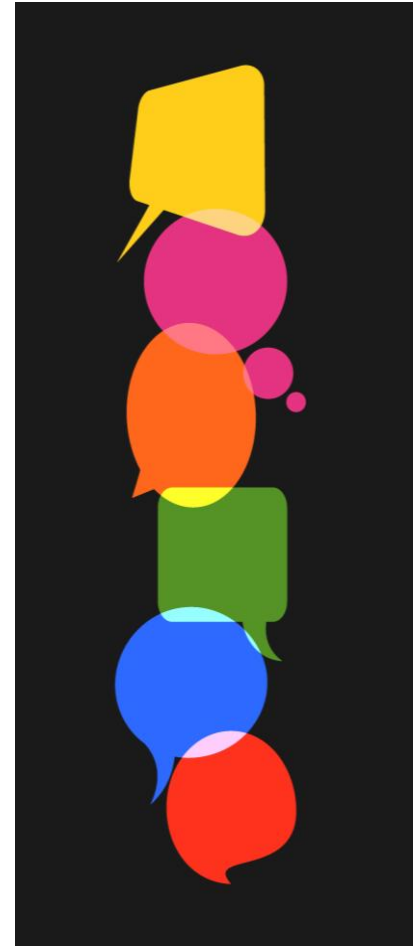
# Feelings Related to Developmental Tasks

- **There can be a great deal of mixed feelings for the older adult due to changes related to developmental tasks.**



# Addressing Challenging Behaviors

- **Communication is key**
- **Be a good listener**
- **Use problem-solving skills to discover the patient's real issue**
- **Respect your patient's right to privacy and independence**
- **Realize the older adult patient may be adjusting to loss of health or independence**
- **Know your emergency contacts**



# VERBAL DE-ESCALATION

## DO

- **Remain calm**
- **Isolate the situation**
- **Enforce limits**
- **Listen**
- **Be aware of nonverbal cues**
- **Be consistent**

## DON'T

- **Over-react**
- **Get in a power struggle**
- **Make false promises**
- **Fake attention**
- **Be threatening**
- **Be condescending**
- **Use jargon that the patient may not understand**

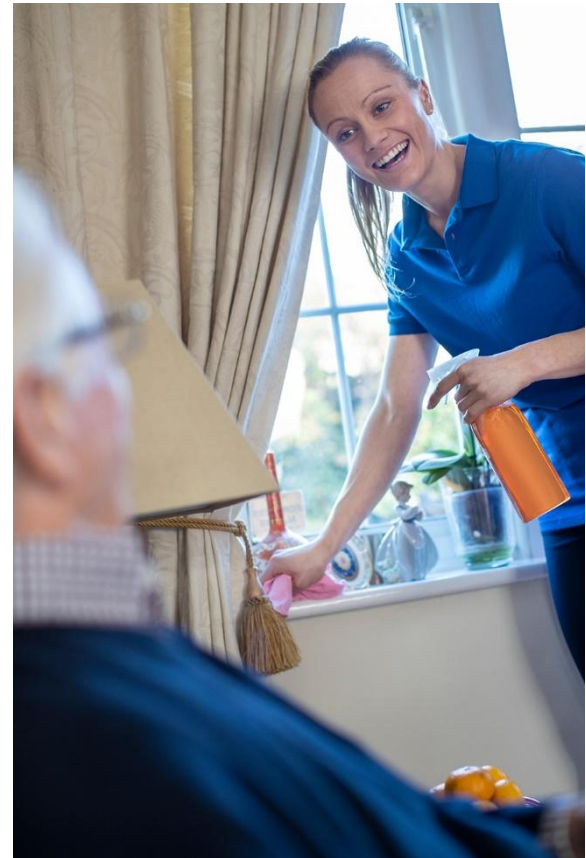
# ACTIVITY #1

## Directives Exercise



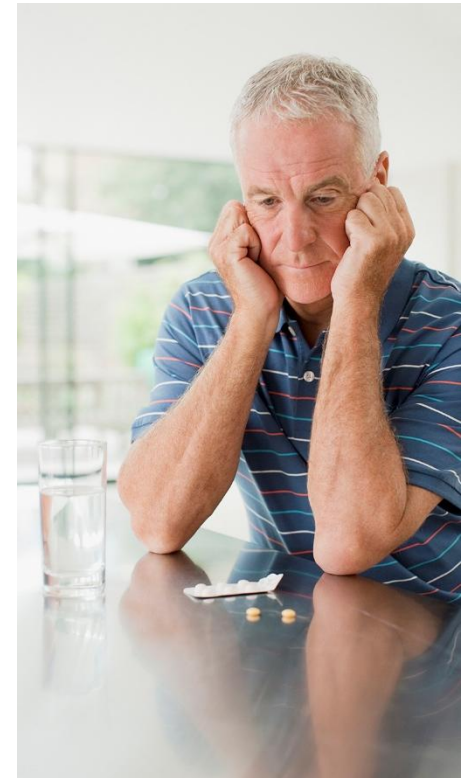
# PHYSICAL COMMUNICATION

- **Your physical presence makes a difference**
- **Be at the same eye level**
- **Do not turn your back to your patient**
- **Stand a good distance away from your patient**
- **Do not stare down your patient.**



# GETTING TO THE REAL REASON

- **Seek out the real reason for the behavior: medication side effect, pain, attention seeking, hungry, needs toileting?**
- **Report all changes in behavior**
- **Adapt to patient's emotional needs**
- **Learn patient triggers**
- **Talk to nurse about therapies not on care plan: pet therapy, art therapy, music therapy, new activities**



# ACTIVITY #2

**In what situation would  
YOU react with anger?**



# HANDOUT #1

## Do's and Don't's of Communication and Dementia





**As with any person, your patients are going to have good days and bad days. Maintaining your composure and treating your patients with respect, even if at that time it does not feel like they are respecting you, will help you to work with a challenging patient. Of course, all occurrences of challenging behaviors should be reported to your supervisor.**