

Think About It!

Behaviors are how our residents communicate, even those without a dementia diagnosis.

Antipsychotics can impair a resident's ability to communicate his or her needs such as pain, hunger, fear, loneliness and boredom.

Antipsychotics and Dementia

The behaviors in dementia often can and do challenge us, as well as the person experiencing them.

Try these strategies when observing and responding to behaviors:

- Rule out pain, thirst, hunger or the need to use the bathroom.
- Speak in a calm low-pitched voice.
- Maintain eye contact, get to their height level and allow space.
- Try to reduce excess stimulation.
- Review medications, especially those that are new.
- Ask others what works for them.
- Focus on how the resident is feeling, not necessarily the content of what the resident is saying. Sometimes emotions are more important than words.
- Understand the resident may be expressing thoughts and feelings from their own reality. Offer reassurance and understanding. **DO NOT** challenge them!
- Be aware of past traumas (veterans, abuse survivors, survivors of large-scale disasters.)
- If you appear to be the cause of the problem, leave the room for a while.
- Avoid asking the resident to do what appears to trigger an agitated or aggressive response.

Simple Strategies for Antipsychotic Reduction