

How Alzheimer's Queensland works with Behaviours associated with Dementia

The services provided by Alzheimer's Queensland (AQ) are based on the assessed holistic needs of each individual client including behaviours of clients with dementia. In assessing these unique behaviours we consider the following general principles related to behaviours:

Behavioural and physical changes are ongoing as dementia progresses.

- AQ provides timely, responsive and flexible person-centred services. The person with dementia is treated as an adult whose dynamic life has history, purpose, relationships, culture and meaning.

Behaviours may vary depending on the type of dementia e.g. they may appear early in Frontotemporal dementia but in later stages in Alzheimer's disease.

- AQ health professionals have expertise to assess, guide and offer ongoing education and personalised services to carers and their loved ones as they travel along their dementia journey. Education is delivered e.g. one on one or within Carer Support Groups or online.

Behaviours are a form of communication e.g. expressing unmet needs (behaviours may be concerning to carers) or meet needs (positive responses or behaviours).

- AQ staff are trained to creatively respond to and support the best interests of a diverse range of clients when responding to sudden or gradual changes.

Behaviours from which a cumulative level of distress occurs for the person with dementia or their carer may lead to premature residential aged care

Alzheimer's Queensland

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admission particularly if night time wandering occurs.

- AQ offers services such as Home Care Packages, day respite, in home respite to ensure that carer's needs are acknowledged and the person with dementia is supported at home for as long as possible. We recognise that individual carers' responses to stressors differ but behavioural issues are often recognised as being more stressful to carers than functional decline. Carers may tend to neglect their own health and wellbeing.

Behaviours can be best managed when focus is given to individual abilities, strengths, valued routines, culture and possible triggers.

- AQ acknowledges that the person with dementia has a capacity to thrive within their community of interest with support. The focus of AQ is not on impairment or deficits but on purposeful meaningful roles and retaining optimal level of skill and participation.

Consider if the behaviour is occasional, causing problems or not causing problems -for the carer or for the person with dementia?

- AQ comprehensively assesses and regularly reviews its services with the person with dementia, their family and advocates. Stress reduction and improved well-being and time out for carers is prioritised by staff. Typically

stress increases when carers have not developed skills in relation to the unpredictable nature of problematic behaviours.

Consider the emotion when the behaviour is being exhibited e.g. does the person appear anxious, sad, happy, angry, bored, agitated.

- AQ Assessors and Staff and the environments provided for service provision demonstrate respectful acknowledgement of the emotional needs of both carers and the person with dementia. Minimal restrictions are placed on the mobility or choice of the person with dementia.

Consider if there is a consistent time of day when the behaviour occurs e.g. morning, afternoon, night.

- AQ acknowledges that experiences evoke memories or meaning for the person and we work hard to understand and interpret the demonstrated behaviour. We work with carers to prompt and increase awareness of possible triggers related to behaviours.

Consider if the behaviour e.g. wandering always occurs in the same area.

- AQ listens to the accounts from carer's in relation to their experiences and their knowledge of the person with dementia to ensure assessment and intervention is accurate and there

is a timely response to changing needs.

Consider if the behaviour e.g. wandering outside the home is a high risk if the person often goes to door, tries to use handles and/or follow others out and may get lost.

- AQ case managers and professional staff such as occupational therapists and an interior design manager work tirelessly to promote a safe living and social environment in all our Residential Aged Care Facilities, Multiservice Centres and the homes of the clients.

For further information and assistance with dementia whatever its cause, please contact Alzheimer's Queensland on the Advice Line: 1800 639 331

