

**A Communique by the Toronto Partnership on Aging and Developmental Disabilities for Care Providers of Aging Adults with Developmental Disabilities**

# Knowledge Bites

November, 2016  
Volume 1, Issue 4

## Dementia in the Context of Developmental Disabilities: Caregiving Strategies to Support Changing Abilities

What you might see?	Caregiver Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty learning NEW tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate the activity or break up the task into smaller doable steps E.g. instead of washing and drying the dishes, client will only help you wash the dishes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of well-learned skills, such as crafts and/or day program routines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeat instructions and provide additional cues to compensate for short-term memory loss</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skipping steps (or stalling) during routine hygiene tasks, such as dressing or bathing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide supervision and cueing as needed, e.g. setting up bath supplies</li> <li>Prepare the environment by setting up their clothing in the order in which they will wear it</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to keep simple instructions briefly in mind, especially when the task involves going into another room to carry out the task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trial written reminders or instructions that client can take with them</li> <li>Post instructions on wall of other room</li> <li>Use pictures</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreased ability to understand verbal instructions and/or decreased ability to verbally express themselves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use gestures to supplement your verbal communication</li> <li>Give client ample time to respond</li> <li>Ask close-ended questions or rephrase the question</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shorter sentences and reliance on "formulaic phrases" e.g. I don't know</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask directed yes/no questions</li> <li>Caregiver may need to take more time to clarify that the client has understood what is being asked</li> <li>Ask demonstrative questions such as "show me" or "take me there"</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turning to caregiver to respond for him/her when asked a question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid the temptation to jump in and respond for your client</li> <li>Provide client with simple cues to assist in responding</li> <li>Simplify/rephrase the question</li> </ul>

### What to do?

- Changing abilities may result in the client requiring increased support including supervision, reminders, cueing and set-up.
- Try different approaches to see what works.

### Things To Consider:

Take a Breath.

Be Patient.

Remember:  
It's the Disease,  
Not the Person.

*If you have any suggestions for upcoming Knowledge Bites topics or feedback on this month's issue, contact us at:  
mslobodkin@reena.org*

*Co-editors: Adriana Caggiano, OT Reg. (Ont.) & Sangita Singh, OT Reg. (Ont.)  
Psychogeriatric Resource Consultation  
Program of Toronto*

**Strategies Cont'd on Pg. 2.**

**A Communique by the Toronto Partnership on Aging and Developmental Disabilities for Care Providers of Aging Adults with Developmental Disabilities**

# Knowledge Bites

November, 2016  
Volume 1, Issue 4

## Dementia in the Context of Developmental Disabilities: Caregiving Strategies to Support Changing Abilities

What you might see?	Caregiver Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing signs of perseveration e.g. performing a task over and over or repeating the same phrase multiple times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently call the person by their name</li> <li>Provide tactile cueing to get the client's attention</li> <li>Distract the client away from the task</li> <li>You may have to repeat your command a few times before you are able to distract them</li> <li>Speak calmly and answer the question like it's the first time</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incontinence with decreasing awareness of accidents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide increased supervision</li> <li>Develop a routine toileting schedule</li> <li>Client may need to transition to incontinence products</li> <li>Avoid liquids after 6 or 7pm (unless medically necessary to reduce night time incontinence)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Night wakefulness with day-night confusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourage napping, or keep naps short</li> <li>Provide adequate lighting during the day and reduce light disruption at night</li> <li>Plan and encourage activities during the day</li> <li>If sleep disruption is severe, consider making an appointment with your client's physician</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Misplacing or hiding valued items with no recollection of their whereabouts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct routine checks to ensure items are placed in their regular spot</li> <li>Label shelves and drawers to provide visual reminders of where items belong</li> <li>Consider using straps or decorative necklaces for eyeglasses</li> <li>Consider using a fanny pack or bag pack for valuable items</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional outbursts such as bursting into tears or getting angry about very small things that would not have upset them before</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch for a sudden increase in movement to indicate anxiety</li> <li>Watch for triggers, e.g. increased levels of noise, high traffic times, multiple demands for their attention, and remove the client from these situations</li> <li>Avoid arguing or confronting the client</li> <li>Leave the room for a time out – remember it's the disease not the person</li> </ul>