

Adopting a Culture of Comfort: Dementia Care without Drugs

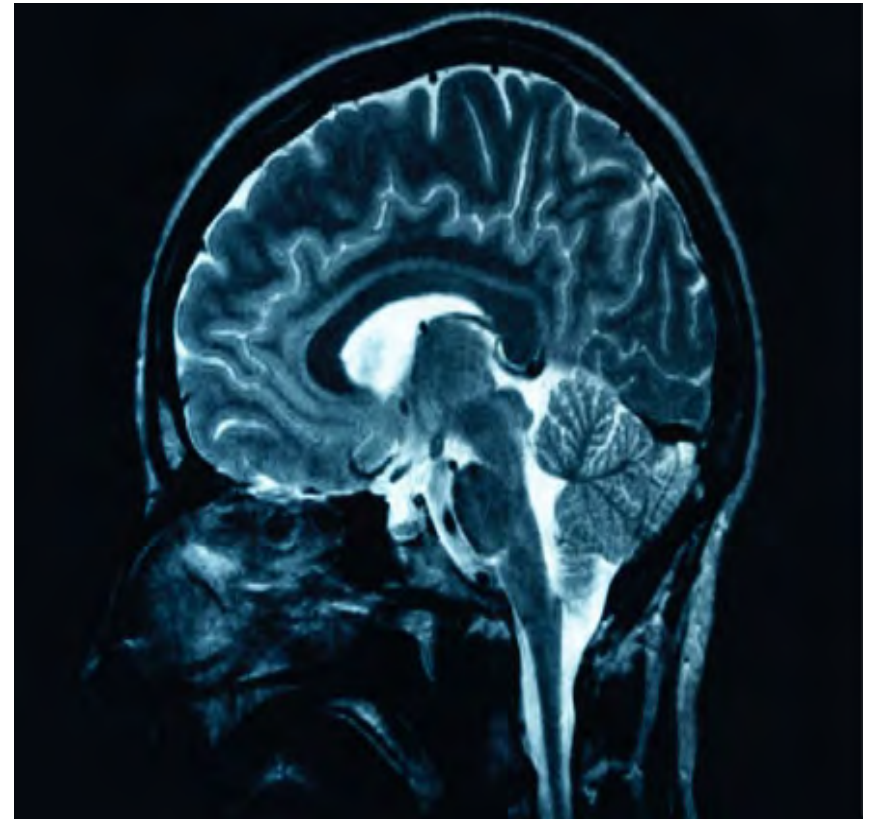
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Session Objectives

1. Describe what to expect from the person experiencing mild, moderate or advanced dementia
2. Describe three things that will promote comfort for people with dementia
3. Define and describe at least three positive outcomes from implementing a comfort culture

The Resilient Human Brain

- ∅ People with dementia are experts on their own comfort
- ∅ Our emotions are intact and we can receive information from the world into our limbic system
- ∅ Information is transferred through our senses
- ∅ When verbal communication is compromised we communicate through our behavior/actions



What is Comfort?

Merriam-Webster's definition

1. *"To give strength and hope to"*
2. *"To ease the grief or trouble of"*

Synonyms:

assure, cheer, console, reassure, soothe

Antonyms:

Distress, torment, torture, trouble



The Clinical Definition of Comfort

Comfort care that is holistic in nature and includes interventions which address symptom control, psychological needs of patients and families, quality of life, dignity, safety, respect for personhood, and an emphasis on the use of intact patient abilities and manipulation of the environment.



-- Kovach, Wilson & Noonan, 1996

Why does Comfort Matter?

Questions to consider...

- n How do we choose to live?
- n How do we act when discomfort happens?



Medical Model Versus Comfort Model of Care/Service

Medical Model	Comfort Model
Focused on the physical body and cure	Focused on body, mind and spirit
Care/service is driven by the medical provider	Care/service is driven by the person receiving care/service
Emphasis on staff for task completion	Tasks are scheduled according to a person's needs and wants
Staff members are instructed not to get close to "patients"	Staff members are encouraged to "know the person"
Frequently see s family members as problems	Understands that family members experience problems

Creating A Comfort Culture

1. Educates families and about what to expect from the person with dementia
2. Adopts policy and practice where comfort is the goal for everything
3. Examines and retools organizational or facility systems to be dementia-friendly and personalized

A Comfort Culture Defined

- n Individualized all routines including sleep, dining and bathing
- n Liberalized all diets consistent with the ADA 2010 position paper
- n Utilized a soft approach during caregiving with those we serve
- n Aggressively identifies and treats physical pain
- n Continuously observes each person's actions for discomfort and fixes it

A Comfort Culture Defined

- n Families are essential helping staff understand a person is comfortable or not
- n Human behavior is a legitimate form of communication
- n Reviewing dining and bathing schedules/methods can be a good place to start
- n Making comfort the goal of every experience for the person with dementia is the key

The great myth...

“People with dementia display dementia-related behavior and there’s NOTHING we can do about it.”

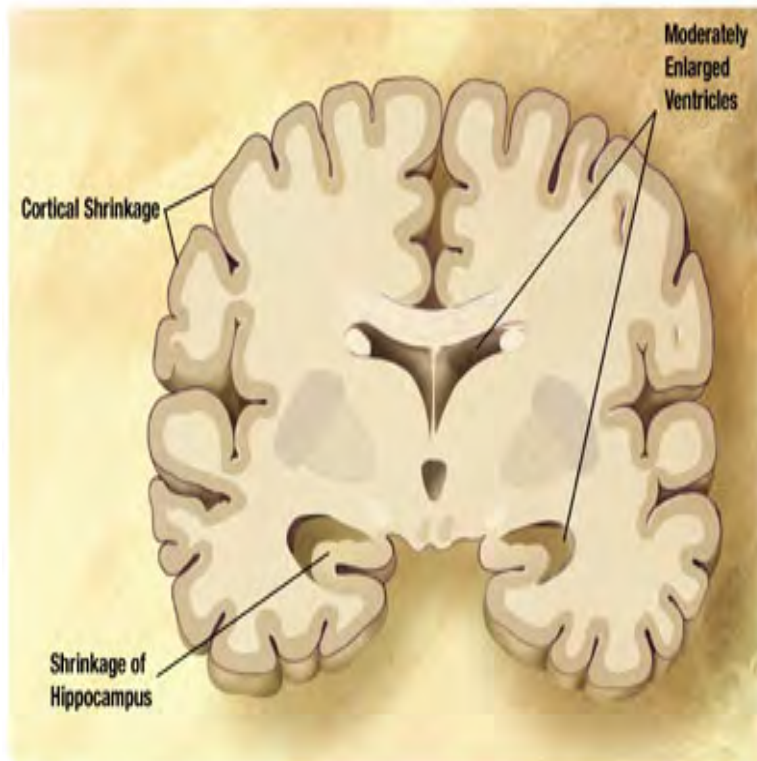


Common dementia-specific behaviors

- n Resists care
- n Refuses medication
- n Curses
- n Disrobes
- n Exit Seeking
- n Calls out

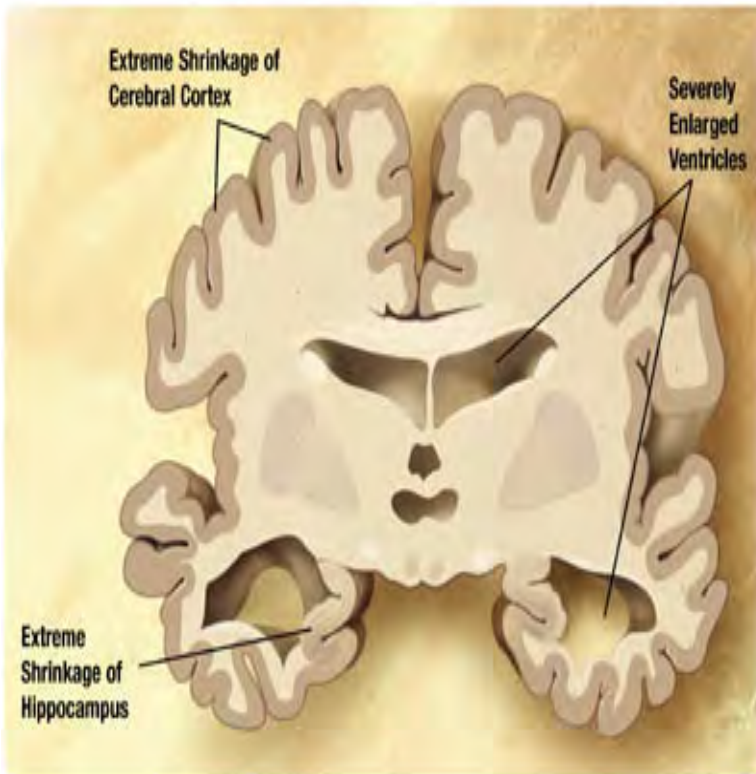


How dementia impacts human behavior-Moderate Dementia



- n Difficulty with short and long – term memory. Struggles to learn new things
- n Difficulties with understanding and being understood
- n Knows comfort and discomfort
- n Can't self regulate emotions
- n Often easily upset or frustrated
- n Can become fearful
- n May misinterpret the actions of others

How dementia impacts human behavior-Advanced Dementia



- n Limited/no short and long-term memory-often lives in the moment
- n Can't learn new information or pick up new routines
- n Unable to carry on meaningful conversation
- n May appear withdrawn and can have difficulty interacting or responding to surroundings

Resists care/service road map

Dementia-specific behavior	What is the person communicating?	Possible remedies
Resists care/service	Physical pain	Pain medication, repositioning , bed rest, ambulation
	Fearful	Slow down, soft approach, back off, Don't reason or confront
	Doesn't want to	Identify personal routine, back off

Calls Out/yells Road Map

Dementia-Specific Behavior	What is the Person Communicating?	Possible Remedies
Calls out/yells	Physical pain	Give pain medication, reposition in bed or chair, ambulate
	Boredom	Use the five senses to engage

Basic Road Map to Comfort

Dementia-specific behavior	What is the person communicating?	Possible remedies

Comfort-focused behavior management tips

1. Make comfort the goal-people who are comfortable don't hit, yell, curse or express other challenges
2. Don't confront or reason
3. Go slow
4. Validate beliefs
5. Report evidence of physical pain



Support for a Comfort Culture

- n Center for Medicaid & Medicare Service
- n New York Times
- n Chicago Tribune
- n Boston Globe
- n Global Mail
- n BBC
- n AARP



Cost and a Comfort Culture



- n No change in staffing ratios
- n Little turnover and minimal call offs
- n Cost reduction in many areas
- n Waiting lists/stellar reputation
- n Few family concerns
- n Great state/federal surveys



Final thoughts

- n Adopting a culture of comfort has a positive impact on people with dementia
- n Understanding how dementia effects the person with dementia gives us insight into how important comfort is for them
- n Human behavior is a form of communication that is present long after the ability to verbalize is gone
- n We have the power to reduce dementia-specific behaviors by adopting a culture that makes comfort the goal of everything we do
- n Long-term care organizations benefit greatly from adopting a culture of comfort for people with dementia

Thank you!

Contact Information

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