

Behavior Is Communication

Dementia changes the way we communicate. There are certain behaviors that represent underlying needs and emotions. Responding to the emotion behind the presenting behavior will help you understand and communicate more effectively.

Resistance	I am trying to process the next step, please be patient with me
Anger	I know things aren't quite right. I am scared because I am unable to make them right again and I don't want to ask for help
Delusions / Hallucinations	I am only able to retain fragments of the bigger picture, so I am making sense of what information I can process
Accusations	This seems like the only logical explanation in my mind because I am sure it is not me who is mistaken
Sadness	I am unable to access happy thoughts in my memory that bring me joy – I might also be struggling to find my purpose in this phase of life
Worry	I can't orient myself or rationalize my fears to calm myself down
Disinhibition	I am confused and I don't know where I am so I don't know the rules
Wandering/pacing	I have always had somewhere to go and that impulse hasn't gone away