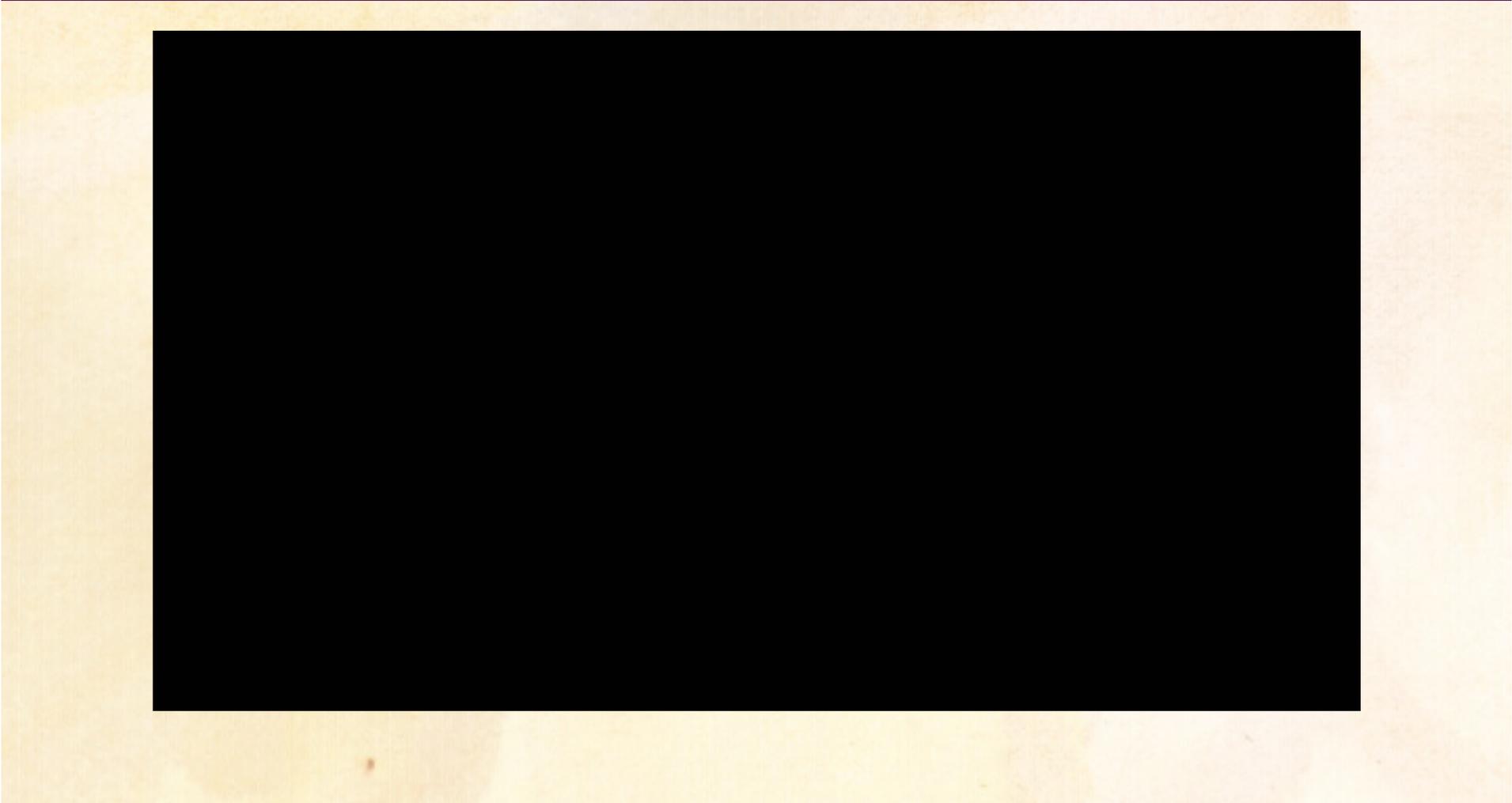


Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

**Module 5: Tips for Maintaining
Health and Safety
With Clients With Dementia**

Presenter's Name
Host Organization

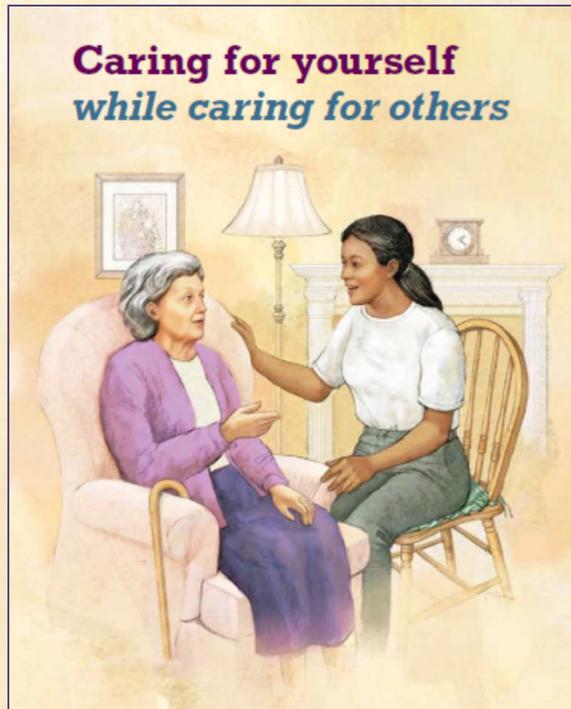


Session Goals

Participants will be able to do the following:

- Identify the health and safety risks of working with people with dementia.
- Explain factors that contribute to clients with dementia becoming agitated and potentially dangerous to themselves, workers, and others.
- Discuss ways to be as safe as you can when working with clients with dementia.

Welcome and Introductions



Please tell us

- Your name.
- Your role in homecare.
- How long have you been working in homecare?
- What do you know about dementia?
- What do you know about its causes, symptoms, progression.

Understanding Dementia

Dementia is not a disease ...

- It is a set of symptoms that accompanies certain diseases—most commonly Alzheimer’s— or physical conditions that damage the brain.
- There are more than 100 dementia-related illnesses.
- Dementia can plateau, but it tends to be a progressive condition, worsening over time.

Symptoms of Dementia¹

1. Memory loss and disruption.
2. Challenges in planning and solving problems.
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks and activities.
4. Confusion about time, place, and people.
5. Trouble understanding spatial relationships.

¹Adapted from: 10 Early Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's, Alzheimer's Association, www.alz.org

Symptoms of Dementia

6. Problems using words, speaking, or writing.
7. Misplacing things, losing ability to retrace steps.
8. Decreased or poor judgment.
9. Withdrawal from social or work activities.
10. Changes in mood and personality.

How Would You Feel and React?



“They say other people will clean my house and make my meals. Those are my jobs! How can they act like I’m not capable of doing things? I hate having other people I don’t even know in my home! This is just wrong.”

Behaviors and Reactions That Cause Health and Safety Risks

- Clients try to do activities—such as walking, toileting, cooking, cleaning, hobbies—but they lack the balance, memory, or coordination to do them successfully. This puts people with dementia at greater risk of falls, burns, cuts, and other dangers.
- Clients become agitated or angry at their own frustrations and confusions.
- Clients may reject offered assistance they need.

Behaviors and Reactions That Cause Health and Safety Risks

- Clients may lash out—doing things such as hitting, kicking, biting, slapping, pushing, or shoving.
- They may act out of poor impulse control, delusions, or confusion—and they may make intimate or sexual overtures.
- Clients may perseverate with ideas and questions—asking the same things over and over and over.

Responses That Can Increase Health and Safety Risks

Workers can provoke a response by:

- Showing anger or frustration.
- Trying to argue logically with the person with dementia.
- Speaking or yelling with an angry tone.
- Rushing a person with dementia.
- Grabbing, slapping, or other physical actions.



Photo by Thinkstock

Worker Health and Safety Risks With People With Dementia

- Home emergencies due to risky behavior of clients.
- Physical assault.
- Stress, frustration, and hurt in response to irrational behavior and speech.
- Grief, stress, and other powerful emotions in response to the “loss” of the person as known before the dementia progressed.

Areas to Focus on to Reduce Health and Safety Risks

- Keeping the physical environment and activities as safe as possible.
- Physically interacting with people with dementia in ways most likely to keep them calm.
- Promoting calm and positive verbal interactions.



Keep the Physical Environment as Safe as Possible

- Reduce the risk of falls, trips, and slips.
- Reduce access to dangerous objects and activities.
- Create a comfortable and soothing environment.



Keep Activities as Safe as Possible

- Take it slow, at client's pace.
- Take one step at a time.
- Speak simply and concretely.
- Stay warm and encouraging.
- Shift gears if client becomes fatigued or stressed.



Physically Interacting to Help People With Dementia Be Calm

- Slowly approach from the front.
- Bend so you are eye-to-eye.
- Look into people's faces, make eye contact.
- Call people by the names you learn they prefer.
- Move to the side, give space.
- Let them take your offered hand.
- Be careful about touching.



<http://www.ready.gov/seniors>

Promoting Calm and Positive Verbal Interactions

The “3Rs Strategy”

- 1. Respond**—Assess and respond to emotions. Give a direct answer that won’t increase distress.
- 2. Reassure**—Name the emotions or concerns they express. Show your own warmth and concern.
- 3. Redirect**—Draw attention to activities or subjects that you know may be pleasantly distracting, such as food, music, storytelling, or hobbies.

Positive Interactions Using the 3Rs Strategy

In your small group, use the 3Rs Strategy to respond to your assigned scenario:

- How would you Respond, Reassure, and Redirect?
- What might a client say in response?



Prepare to present or role play your answers!

People With Dementia May Become Physically Aggressive

This can happen for many reasons:

- Pain or discomfort from physical conditions.
- Stress in the environment, such as the level of noise, activity, other stimuli, or temperature.
- Stressful interactions with others.
- Delusions, paranoia, or other impacts of their dementia.

Responding When Clients Pose a Health and Safety Threat

- Stand safely—with feet 18 inches apart.
 - Stand to the side of the client.
 - Keep a distance of 6 feet, if possible.
- Keep client as safe as possible.
 - Remove objects that could harm the client.
 - Accompany the client—without touching.
- Call for help.

Thanks for participating!

Additional Resources:

- Alzheimer's Association's "Dementia Care Practice Recommendations for Professionals Working in a Home Setting, Phase 4."
http://www.alz.org/national/documents/phase_4_home_care_recs.pdf

Credits

- [Insert trainer and/or training organization's name(s), and contact information here.]