Non-Pharmacological Interventions by Behavior

LeadingAge Midwest
Illinois · Iowa · Missouri

Agitation & Aggression i.e. yelling & hitting

- Soothing music
- Aromatherapy
- Massage therapy
- Validation therapy
- Use of humor
- 1:1 interaction
- De-escalation training for caregiver
- Therapeutic touch
- Quiet retreat area
- Maintain routine and predictability

Wandering i.e. pacing, exit seeking

- Safe walking paths
- Regular walking routines
- Environmental cues & signage
- Engaging purposeful tasks
- Nature therapy or gardening
- Personalized memory stations
- Use of contrasting colors for exits
- Provide companionship during peak restlessness
- Photographs or life stories near room
- Install visual barriers on exit doors

Depression, Apathy & Social Withdrawal

- Reminiscense therapy
- Art therapy
- Pet therapy
- Group activities
- Spiritual support or rituals
- Reading aloud familiar texts
- Therapeutic storytelling
- Music from their youth or happy memories
- Gardening or nature-based tasks
- Purposeful activities

Resistance to Care i.e. refusal to eat, bathe

- Use of consistent caregivers
- Offering choices and control
- Break tasks into simpler steps
- Use positive reinforcement
- Approach slowly and respectfully
- Use of name and eye contact
- Involve the person in care when possible
- Provide visual cues or demonstrations
- Provide care during calm periods
- Play calming music before and/or during care tasks

Anxiety, Fear, & Nighttime Disturbances i.e. sundowning

- Use of weighted blankets
- Create a calming bedtime routine
- Dim lighting in the evening
- Provide familiar items (photos or objects)
- Limit caffeine and sugar intake
- Offer reassurance and gentle touch
- Rocking chairs or rhythmic motion
- Use a clock or day/night indicator
- Reduce background noise
- Offer a comfort object (stuffed animal or pillow)

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