

Identify the Problem

- Determine if there are undetected or untreated medical problems
- Determine if there is a correlation between drug changes and changes in behavior
- Consider the possible role of drug effects including toxicity/delirium, side effects (akathisia, disinhibition), withdrawal effects, interaction effects
- Look for any correlation with stressful life events and changes
- Assess all environments including structure/supports to meet cognitive developmental needs

Intervene

- Reactive intervention (aimed at managing, rather than reducing challenging behavior when it occurs, with reference to clear guidelines (e.g. control and restraint, emergency medication).
- Ecological intervention (those which alter the environment or routine in order to use or change the contingencies supporting the behavior or to control the antecedents to it, for e.g. increasing the amount of personal space, reduction of noise levels).

If reactive and/or ecological interventions are not successful,

For a Medical emergency
Call 911

For a Mental Health emergency or crisis with (suicidal, homicidal and/or self-injurious behavior, psychosis)
Call 1-877-466-0660

Information extracted from:
Grabowski, D. C., Aschbrenner, K. A., Rome, V. F., & Bartels, S. J. (2010). Quality of Mental Health Care for Nursing Home Residents: A Literature Review. Medical Care Research and Review

<http://www.ascseniorcare.com/mental-illness-vs-dementia-elderly/>

Psychiatry of Intellectual Disability: A Practical Manual by Gentile & Gillig, 2012.



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Mental Illness and/or Dementia in NF IDD Residents

Know the Signs

Identify the Problem

Intervene

Get Help

For more information on training opportunities contact hub@hillcountry.org

Prevalence

- A high proportion of nursing home residents have a significant mental disorder
- Dementia, as well as its behavioral and psychiatric symptoms, has long been the most prevalent mental disorder in nursing homes
- Recent data indicate that the proportion of new nursing home admissions with mental illness other than dementia, including major depression and serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, has overtaken the proportion with dementia only
- Nursing homes must “ensure that a resident who displays mental or psychosocial adjustment difficulties receives appropriate services to correct the assessed problem”
- The law prohibits the use of unnecessary physical restraints and provides guidelines for the use of antipsychotic medications.

Know the Signs

Mental Illness:

- Depression is considered the most common mental disorder among seniors and among the IDD population. Social isolation plays a major role in emotional wellness and in the lives of individuals with IDD and seniors.
- Late onset bipolar. Most patients with bipolar are diagnosed in early adulthood. Late onset bipolar can be difficult to diagnose because of its similarities to dementia symptoms like agitation, manic behavior and delusions.
- Late onset schizophrenia. This disorder also presents a challenge to diagnose. It can manifest in adults after age 45 and appears as the patient ages. Symptoms are similar to dementia, once again, with hallucinations and paranoia the most common, but these symptoms are milder than when this illness appears in younger adults.

Know the Signs

Dementia:

- Depression is also a symptom of dementia and tends to get overlooked as a treatable ailment.
- Loss of learned skills
- General confusion.
- Hard time recognizing friends and family members or think they are someone else entirely.
- Personality and emotional changes.
- Those with dementia are often fearful or depressed and experience severe mood swings.

Note: Distinguishing the signs of dementia and mental illness may be difficult, more so with an individual with IDD; what is important, is that you identify the problem, assess the risk of harm to self or others, and exhaust all possible interventions.