



# CONNECTING MINDS

## DEMENTIA CARE NEWSLETTER

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### The Role of Caring and Non-Caring Styles in Managing Responsive Behaviours

When interacting with people who have dementia, one of the most prevalent issues raised by staff working in long-term care, community agencies, or in an individual's home is the issue of how to respond to specific types of behaviours. "Challenging" or "disruptive" behaviours may result from dementia or other physiological processes and/or, may be due to environment, life circumstances, and /or interactions.

Understanding behaviours as responses to something negative or confusing in the person's environment or as a means of communication an unmet need –"responsive" behaviours-can help us to identify environmental and interactional sources and explore new ways of responding.

In a recent MAREP study the importance of staff members approach to responsive behaviour became clear. The "style" by which one approaches her job is viewed as a crucial factor in responding to responsive behaviours. A "caring" style was not only seen as an important way to prevent responsive behaviours but was also considered necessary in responding appropriately to behaviours. A "non-caring style" was determined to trigger responsive behaviours.

The differentiating factor between a caring and a non-caring style was the demonstrated level of respect for the resident as an individual and as a valued human being. Both caring and non-caring styles were centered around four areas:

- Voice and spoken word
- Body language
- Relational styles
- Being "with the person" vs. "with the task"

This MAREP research implies that organizational structure and systemic factors play an important role in the ability of staff to develop caring styles. Such obstacles might be staffing shortages, heavy workloads, and lack of time, all of which might pose significant challenges. At the centre of a caring style is a relationship centered approach. Relationships take time to develop and nurture, yet increasing demands on front-line staff and staff shortages limit that time.

Adopting caring styles, particularly by developing relationships with residents, can enhance staff's abilities to manage responsive behaviours and may also decrease the frequency and intensity of behaviours exhibited by residents. Our long-term care homes need to foster caring environments styles by addressing systemic factors, as well as supporting and enabling staff, hence facilitate staff to fully embrace caring styles.

Reference:

The Role of Caring and Non-Caring Styles in Managing Responsive Behaviours

By Elaine Wiersma and Sherry Dupuis MAREP- Kenneth G. Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program, University of Waterloo

## Caring and Non-Caring Styles as Identified by Staff

### CARING STYLE

### NON-CARING STYLE

#### **Caring through Voice and Spoken Language**

- providing the resident with information; explaining what the staff member is doing
- simplify language and tasks; reducing the amount of information given
- using a calm, gentle tone of voice and manner

#### **Caring through Body Language**

- approaching the resident from the front
- getting down to the resident's eye level
- using physical affection/touch

#### **Caring through Relational Styles**

- building a close relationship
- seeing beyond the disease
- respecting and believing in continued autonomy and self-determination
- believing the person is "still there"
- knowing and respecting the resident's preferences and routines
- showing an interest in the resident
- really listening to the resident
- being patient

#### **Caring through Being with the Person**

- respecting and being able to move in the resident's reality
- moving with the resident's rhythms, slowing down
- being flexible in routines
- validating the resident's experiences
- being able to empathize with the resident

#### **Non-Caring through Voice and Spoken Language**

- using loud, bossy, authoritative tones and manners
- showing disagreement with the resident
- arguing with the resident
- abruptness in communication with residents

#### **Non-Caring through Body Language**

- using force in an attempt to get the resident to do what is wanted
- barging in on the resident

#### **Non-Caring through Relational Styles**

- being impatient
- showing disinterest/indifference toward the resident
- focusing on the disease process rather than the person behind the disease

#### **Non-Caring through being with the Task**

- focusing only on the task at hand
- hurrying and rushing care
- using a rigid approach to care
- trying to orient the resident to the staff's perception of reality

### **UPCOMING EVENTS — Making Tough Decisions in Dementia Care**

Speaker Daniel Kuhn, MSW, Director, Professional Training Institute Alzheimer's Association will discuss how changes in an older family member's physical or cognitive functioning or in a caregiver's ability to provide care often requires families to make tough decisions. He will address driving, bringing outside help into the home, personal finances, long-term care, end-of-life options and self-care. This presentation is suitable for professional and non-professionals.

**Thursday November 1, 1-4pm**    **There is no charge to attend but pre-registration is required.**  
**Holiday Inn, Brule Room**                      **Call Alzheimer Society at 942-2195 to register and for details.**

### **RESOURCES**

[www.piecescanada.com](http://www.piecescanada.com) P.I.E.C.E.S  
[www.u-first.ca](http://www.u-first.ca) U-First

[www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca) Alzheimer Canada  
[www.marep.uwaterloo.ca](http://www.marep.uwaterloo.ca)

### **Evaluation and Feedback**

To ensure that this newsletter is an effective source of information for you, your feedback is important to us. Please visit our website [www.dementiaalgoma.org](http://www.dementiaalgoma.org) and fill out the evaluation.