

TEN QUESTIONS ABOUT BEHAVIORS

Suggestions of Questions to Ask when Consulting about Distressing Behaviors and a Person with Cognitive Impairment

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These are ten questions for an advisor or consulting health care professional to ask regarding a person with dementia who is engaging in unusual or challenging behaviors. These are questions to ask before initiating a specific problem solving and intervention planning process. The questions here are not in order of priority.

1. What are the behavior(s)? (Describe them in detail including frequency, timing, and duration of occurrence.)
2. Who is concerned about the behaviors and why? How concerned are they?
3. Is the person with dementia safe? Are all other people safe?
4. Is the person with dementia uncomfortable, in pain, or emotional distress?
5. What diagnoses does the person with dementia have?
6. What is the functioning level of the person with dementia?
7. Do the behaviors and functioning level fit the same stage of a typical Alzheimer's progression? Look for "out of order" symptoms to discern if this person actually has a disorder other than Alzheimer's Disease, such as Dementia with Lewy Bodies, or if she/he has another disorder, such as an infection in addition to the Alzheimer's Disease.)
8. What is the history of the person with dementia? Is there evidence of substance abuse or psychiatric symptoms historically or currently?
9. Who has the power to make decisions?
10. What resources are available?