

# caringkind

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CARINGKINDNYC.ORG  
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## Understanding & Decoding Distressing Behaviors

*Stephani Shivers, MEd, OTR/L  
Chief Innovation Officer  
CaringKind*

## Our Speakers


- *Chief Innovation Officer & VP Program Development at CaringKind*
- *18+ years working with individuals and families impacted by Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia*
- *Occupational therapist specializing in cognitive function*
- *30 years leadership experience in not-for-profit organizations*



*Stephani Shivers, MEd, OTR/L  
Chief Innovation Officer, CaringKind*

# Overview: Understanding & Decoding Distressing Behaviors

- Why do people act the way they do?
- What are “behaviors”?
- What can influence behaviors?
  - *What’s happening inside person?*
  - *What’s happening outside person?*
- What can be done to decrease and avoid distressing behaviors?
- Promoting well-being and meaningful engagement




**EDUCATION SEMINAR**  
*A free learning event for individuals, families and professionals*

CaringKind Helpline: 646-744-2900  
caringkindnyc.org  
@caringkindnyc

**LIVE WEBINAR** Tuesday  
March 18, 2025 • 6-7:15 pm EST

## Understanding Emotional Connection & Communication




Caring for someone with dementia involves navigating a landscape of emotional and communication changes. Confusion and language difficulties can quickly lead to arguments. Explanations and logical reasons provide little help.

This webinar will explore:


- **Effective communication tips:** Learn practical verbal and nonverbal communication tools
- **Underlying emotions:** Identify core emotions and discover how they impact interactions
- **Building Empathy:** Develop new ways to relate using empathy and validation of the other person’s emotional reality.

Whether you are new to caregiving or have years of experience, this session offers valuable insights to enhance understanding, promote nurturing interactions, and strengthen relationships.



**Speaker:** Stephani Shivers, MEd, OTR/L  
*Stephani is the Chief Innovation Officer at CaringKind, where she leads the development of new programs and services for individuals and families impacted by dementia. With over 30 years professional experience in not-for-profit leadership and as an occupational therapist specializing in cognitive function, she is nationally recognized as a leader in community-based dementia services. Stephani is driven to “make things better” and to improve people’s quality of and engagement in life.*

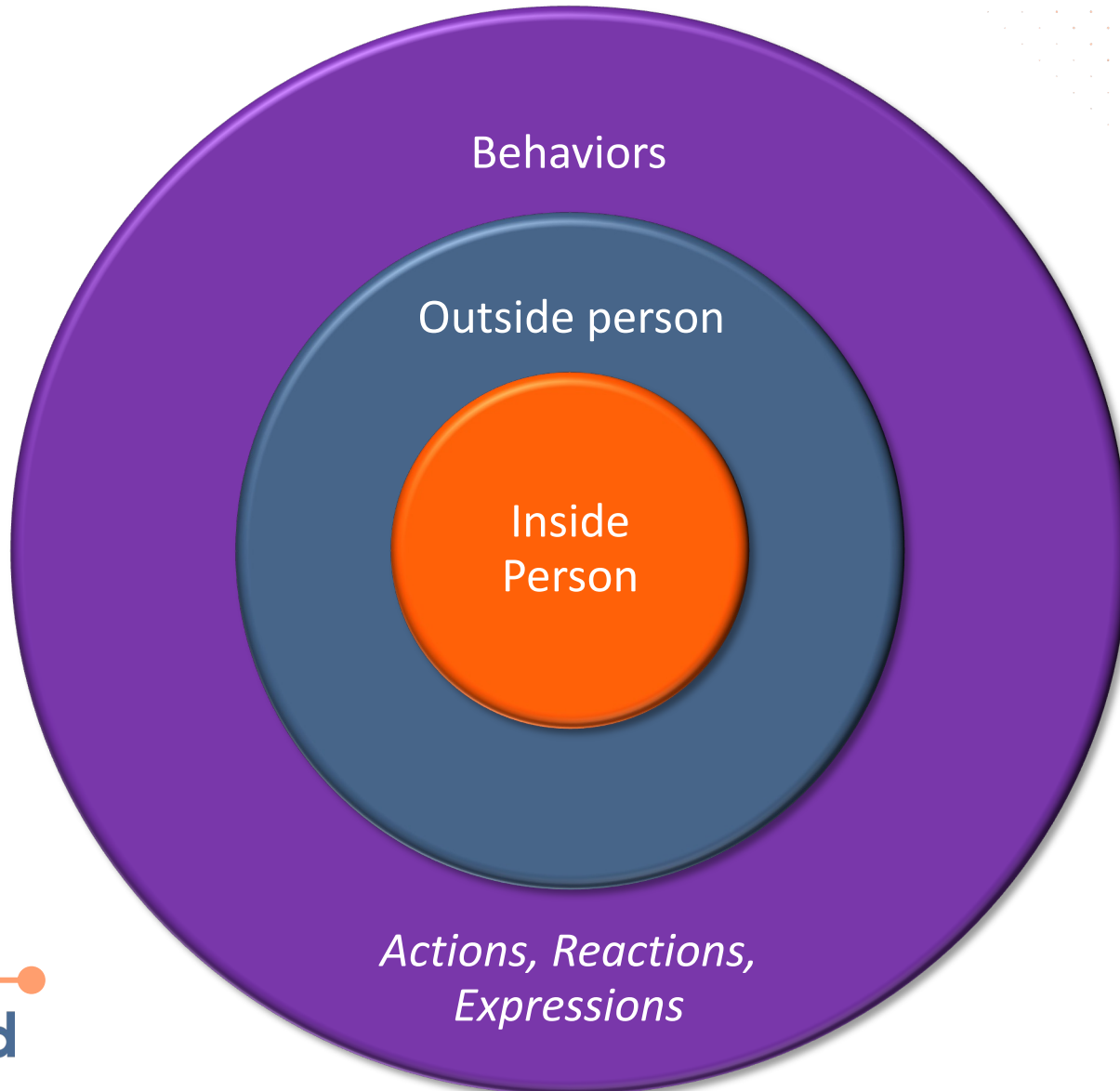
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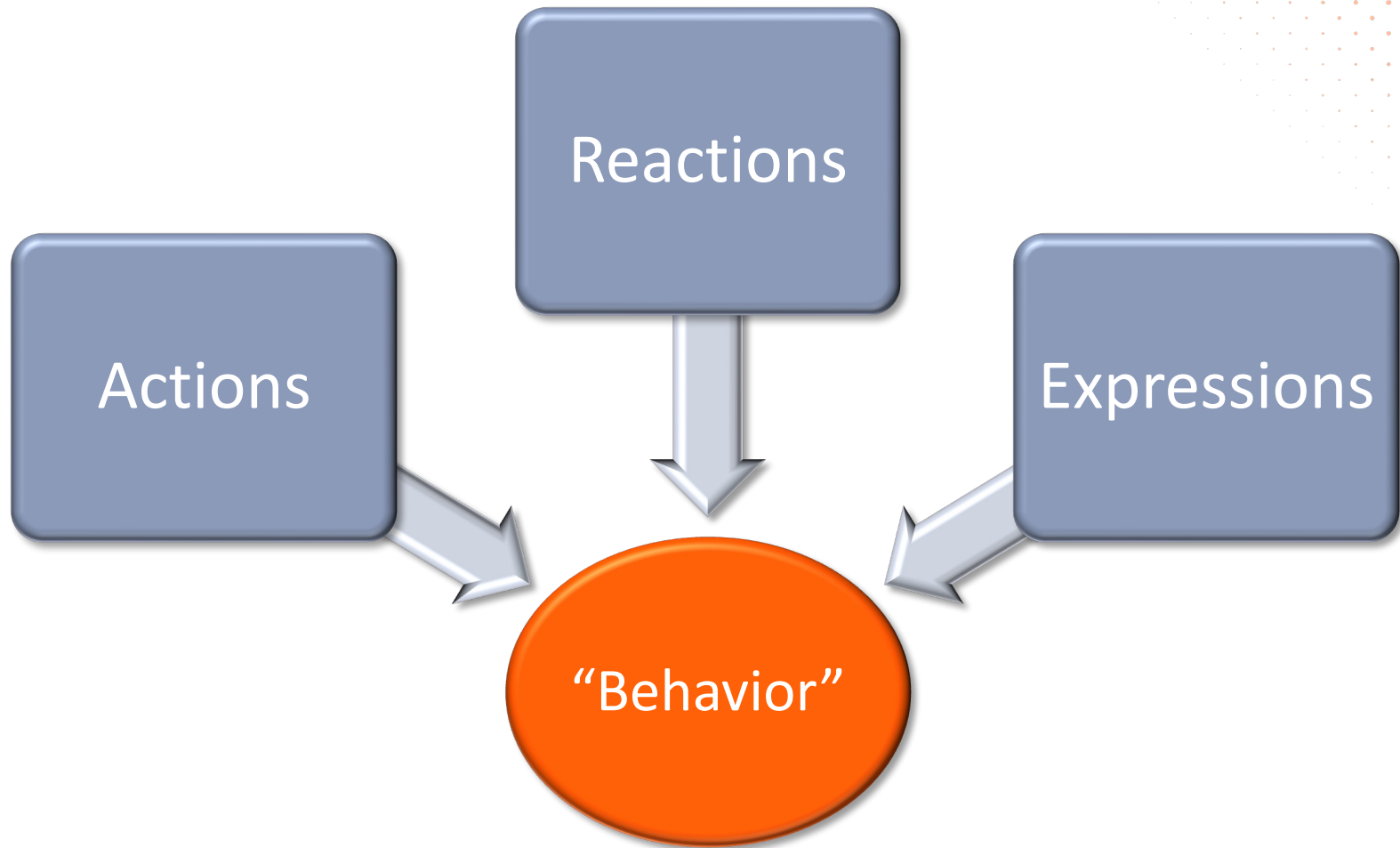
Why do people act the way  
they do?



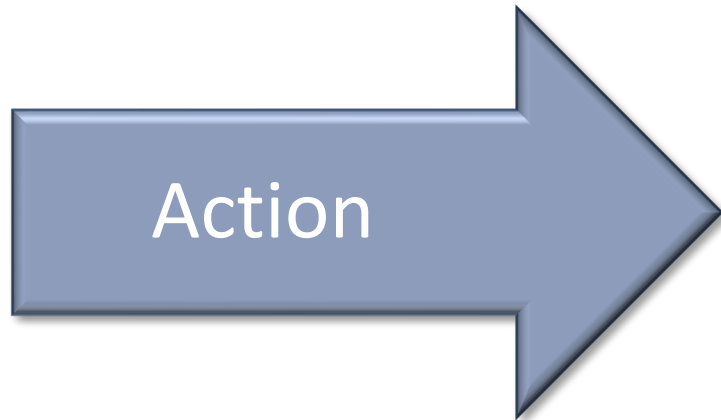
# Why do people act the way they do?



# What is a 'behavior'?



# Actions, Reactions, Expressions



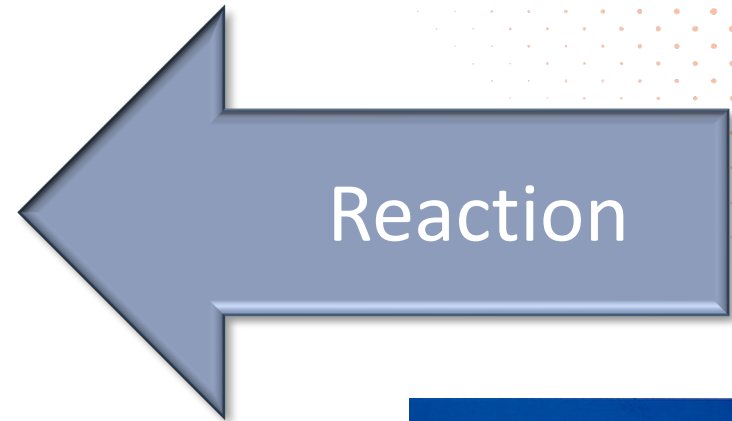
Something we do  
(out of need or desire)



# Actions, Reactions, Expressions

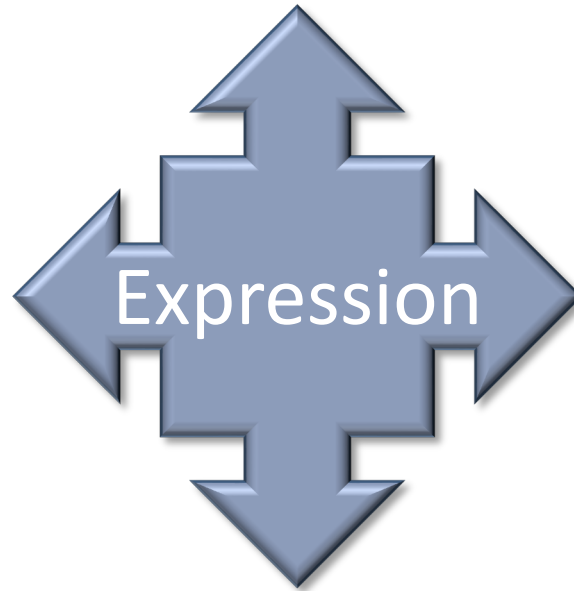


Response to something  
or someone



# Actions, Reactions, Expressions

How I express myself



# Actions, Reactions, Expressions



Action

Reaction

Expression

Outward  
responses based  
in our experience  
with the world

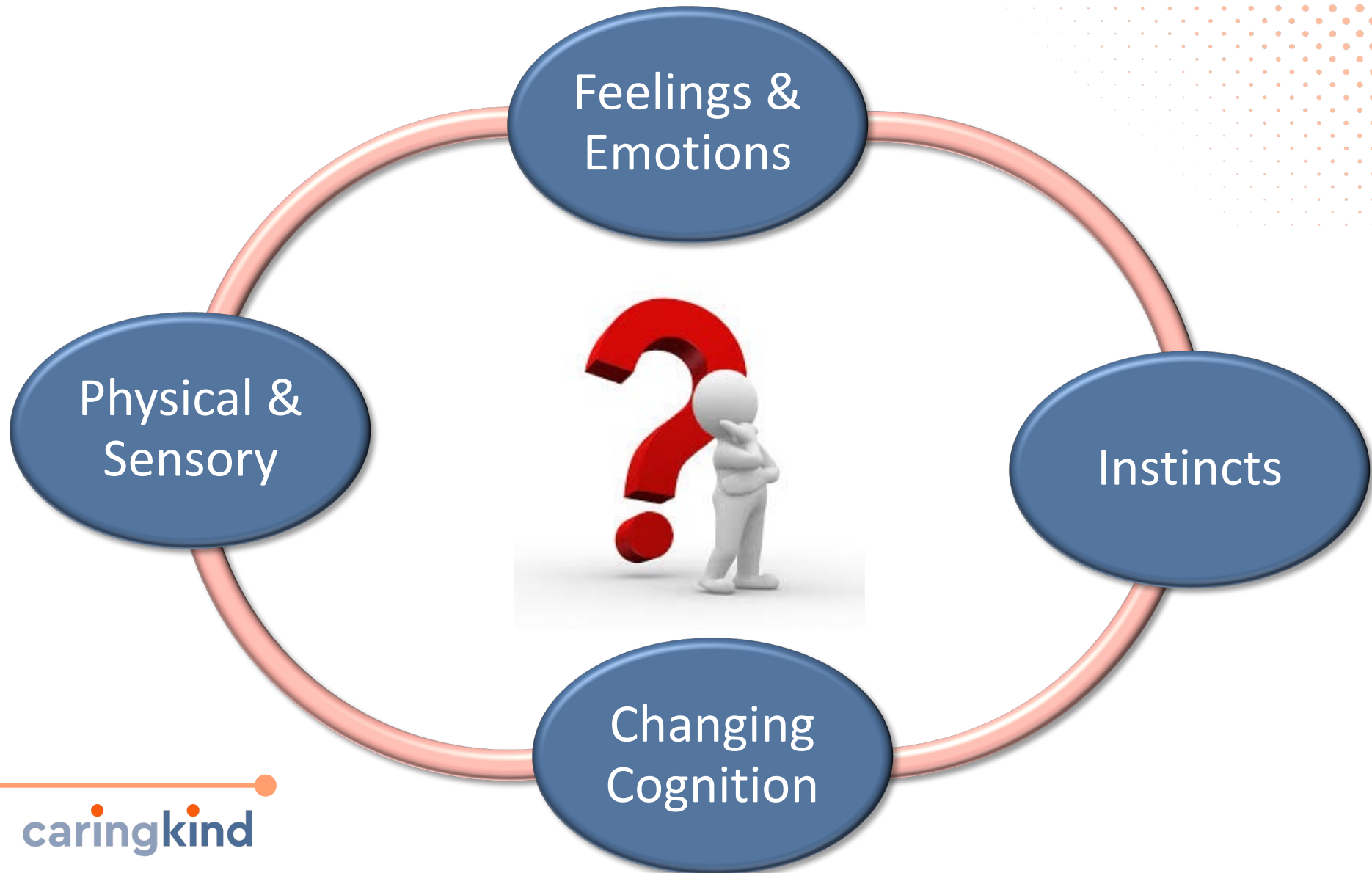
Ways we  
communicate and  
interact with the  
world

What can influence  
behaviors?

*What's going on inside?*



# What is happening INSIDE?



# What's Happening Inside? *Feelings & Emotions*



*What do you think they are feeling?*

*What else might they be feeling?*

# What's Happening Inside? *Instincts*



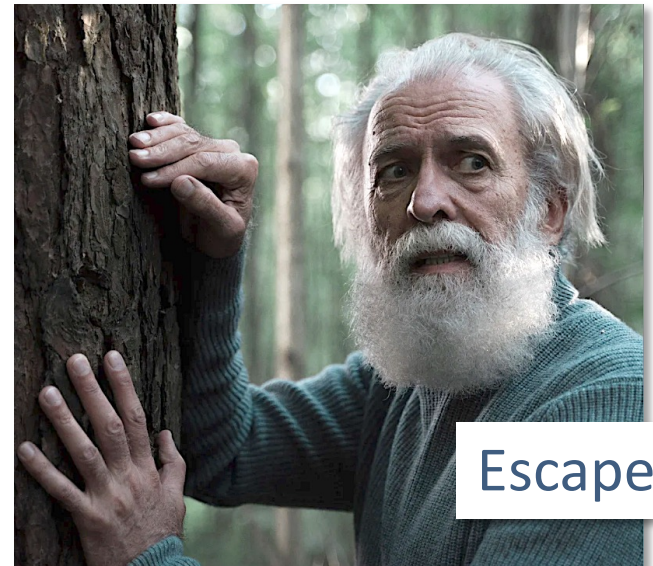
Care,  
Protect



Freeze



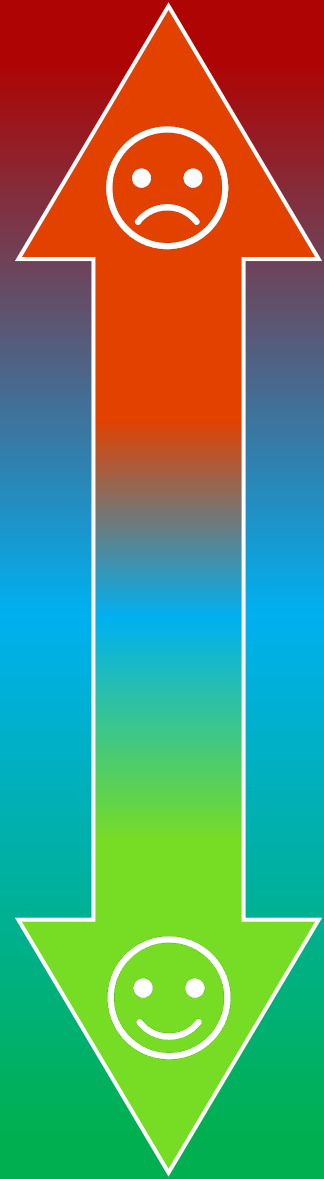
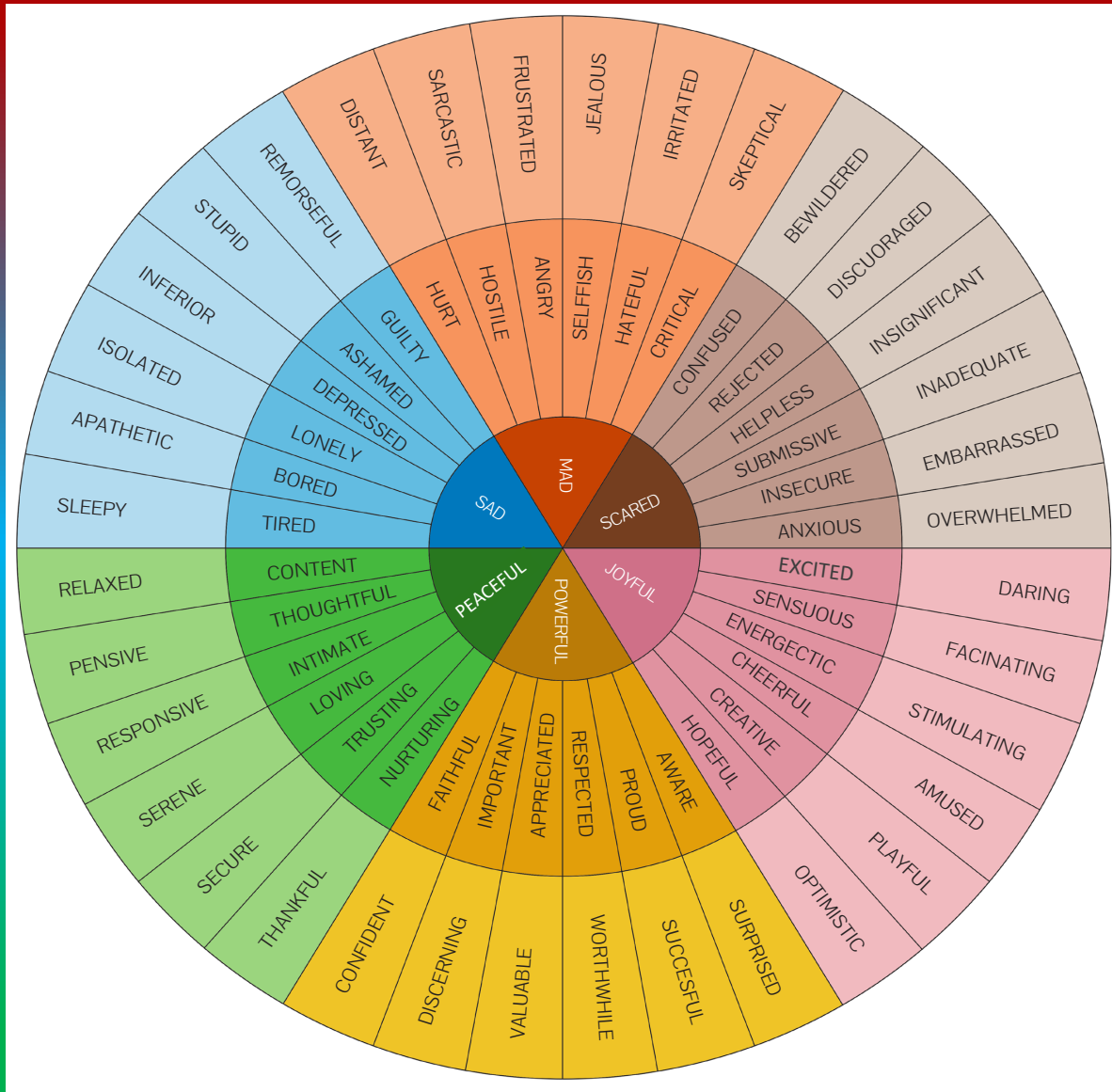
Attraction



Escape



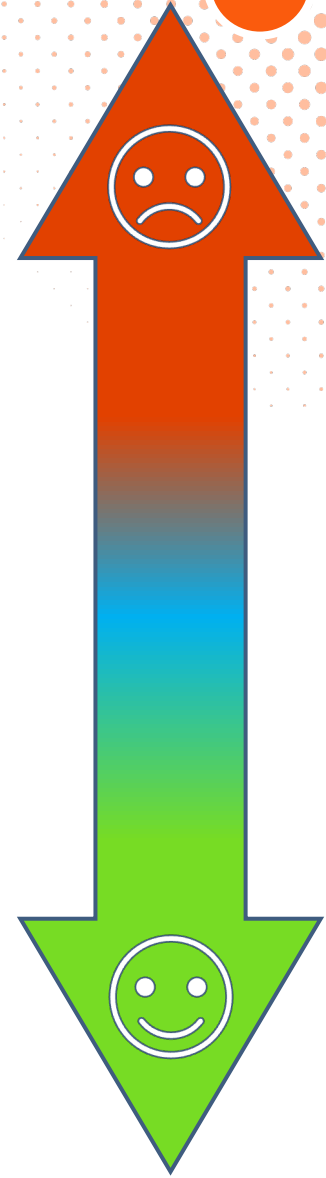
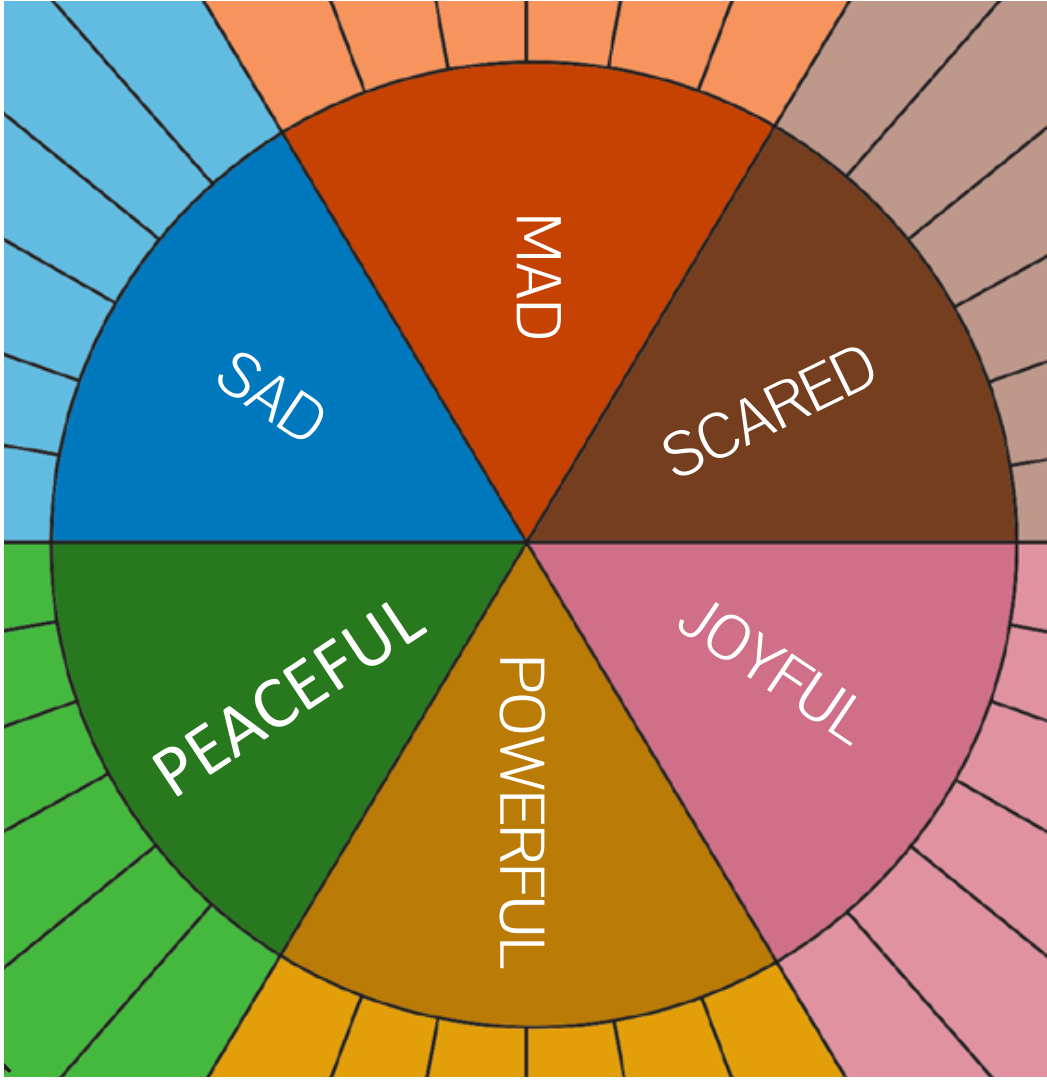
# Distressing / Disempowering Feelings



Feelings Wheel

Comforting / Empowering Feelings

# Feelings Wheel – Primary Feelings



# What's Happening Inside? *Physical & Sensory Experiences*



# What's happening inside?

## *Background, History*



Gender Roles



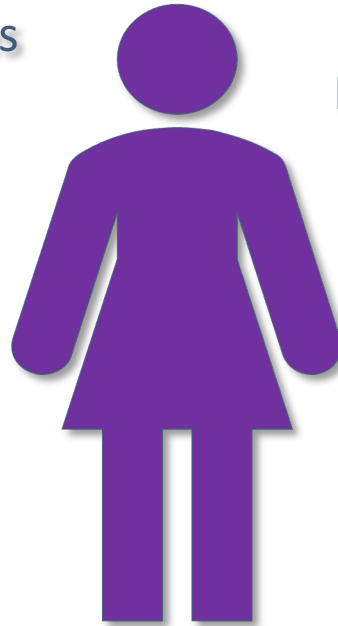
Work Experience



Culture



Family



Faith Tradition



Trauma



# What's happening inside?

## *Changing Cognition*



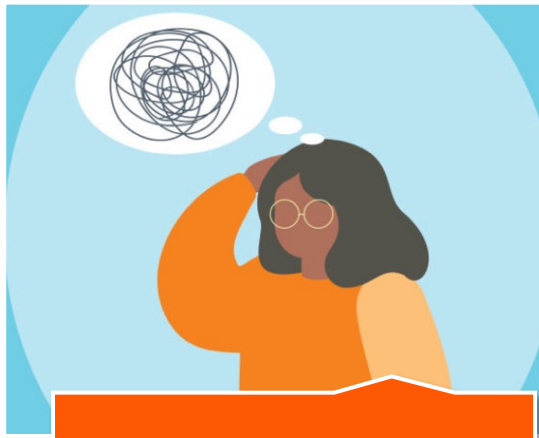
Dementia Type



Dementia Stage



Language Abilities



Cognitive Abilities



Physical Abilities

# What all is happening inside a person?

## *Emotions & Instincts*

- Happy
- Sad
- Surprised
- Bad
- Fear
- Anger
- Relief
- Explore/ Seek
- Connect/ Relate
- Fulfilment
- Care
- Play

## *Physical & Sensory*

- Infection
- Poor Nutrition
- Dehydration
- Depression
- Over/Under Medicated
- Cold, Hot, Itchy
- Pain
- Fatigue
- Hungry, Thirsty
- Dizzy
- Overwhelmed

*Emotions & Instincts*

*Physical & Sensory*

*History & Background*

*Changing Abilities*

## *History & Background*

- Trauma
- Culture
- Family experience
- Work history
- Gender roles

## *Changing Abilities*

- Dementia Type
- Dementia Stage
- Language Abilities
- Cognitive Abilities
- Physical Abilities

# What can influence behaviors?

*What's going on outside?*

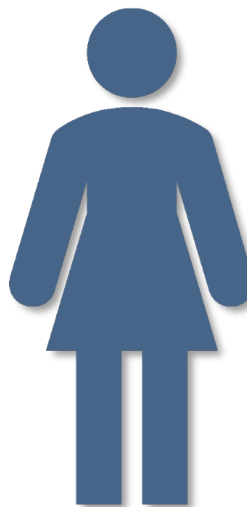
# What's happening outside a person?



Task



People &  
Approach



Environment

# What's Happening Outside a Person?



*Physical Space*



*Sensory Experience*



*Appeal*



*Location*



*People & Relationships*



*Time*



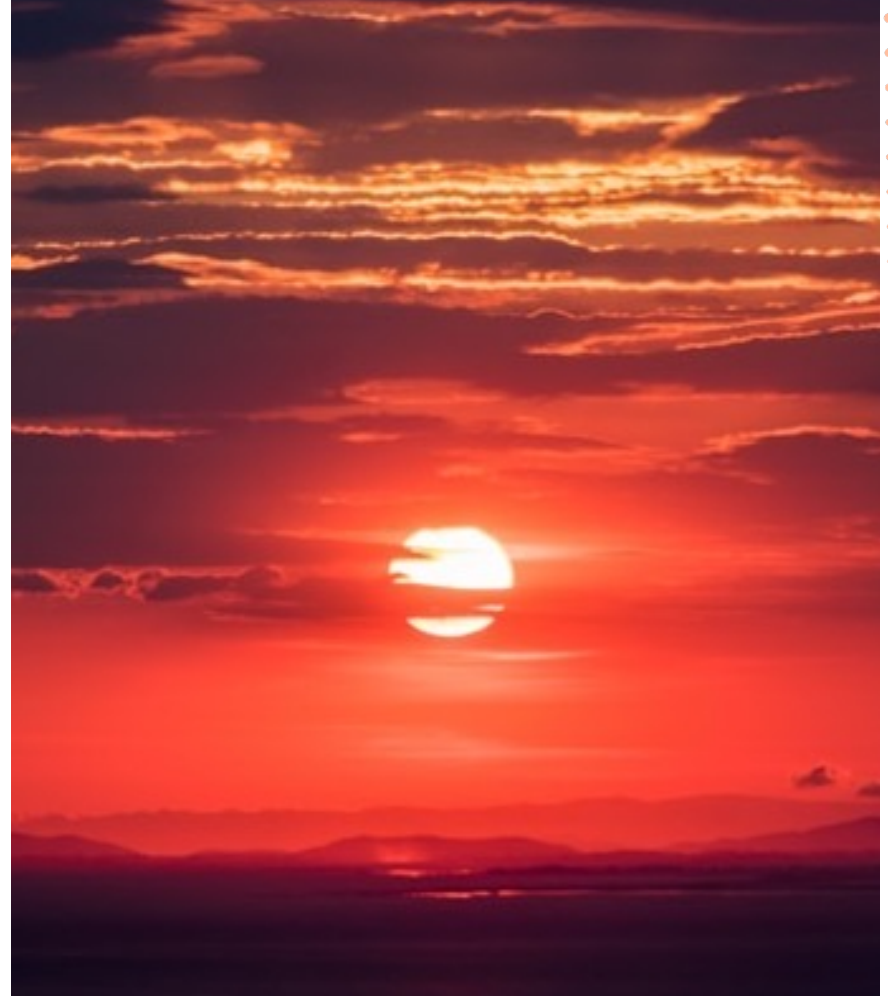
# What's Happening Outside?

## *Environment*



# What's Happening Outside?

*Time of day... season...time of year...*





# What's Happening Outside?

## *Tasks and Activities*

Task = Abilities

Partner provides  
correct level of support

Task too complicated

Partner over or under  
helps



# What's Happening Outside? *Social Environment*



# What's Happening Outside?

## *Relational Attachments*



### Safe

Physical and emotional safety

Feel safe and protected in relationship



### Seen

Experiences, thoughts and emotions are acknowledged and validated.  
Enhances self-worth, value, importance



### Soothed

Being comforted, reassured, and supported when distressed  
Helps to regulate emotions, use coping mechanisms

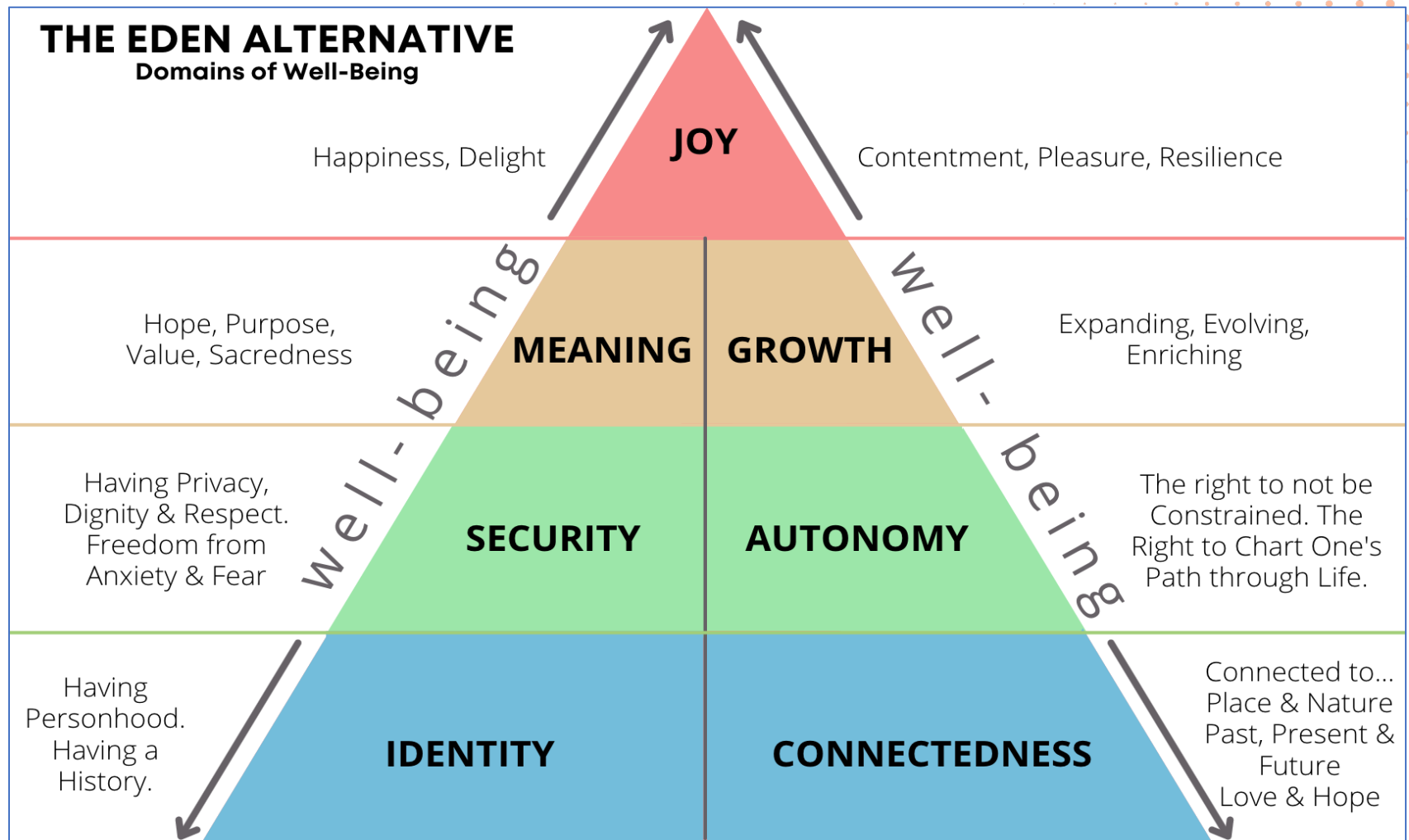


### Secure

Sense of security, predictability, trust.  
Comes from consistency, reliability, availability of relational partner

What can be done to  
decrease and avoid  
distressing behaviors?

# Eden Alternative Domains of Well-Being: *Promoting Quality of Life*



Graphic summary created by: <https://abeautifulvoice.org/>



# Promote Positive Relational Attachment

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## Safe

- Establish routines
- Create safe environment
- Encourage open communication about thoughts and emotions



## Seen

- Practice active listening
- Give full attention, show interest, reflect back
- Validate experiences
- Engage in their enjoyed activities



## Soothed

- Respond sensitively with comfort and reassurance. Validate.
- Stay calm. Mirror calm. Model breathing, pacing, tone.
- Be consistent... as source of support.

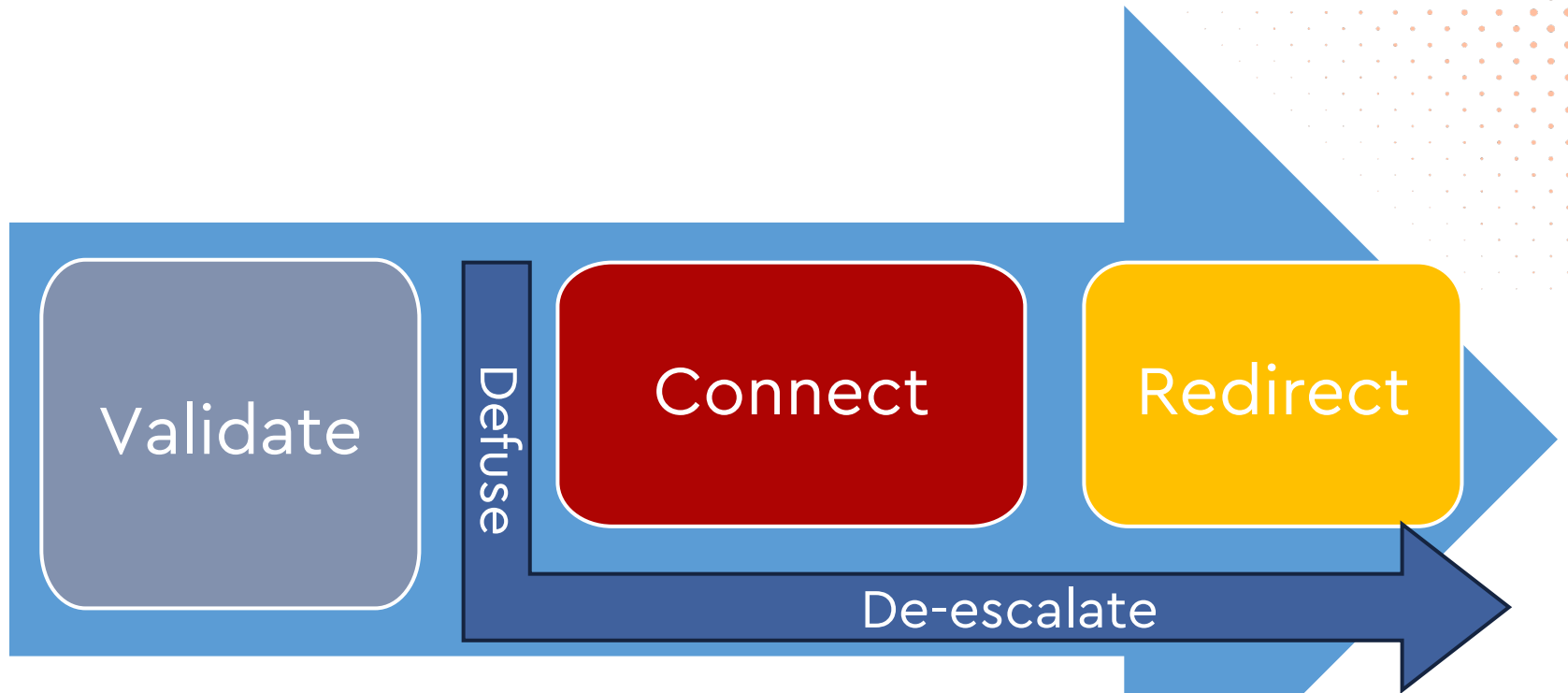


## Secure

- Engage in positive interactions - affection, play, enjoyment
- Create consistency, predictable daily routines.
- Minimize disruptions and changes.

*Be kind to yourself... this is hard  
Get support – you have these needs too*

# Responding to Distress



Safe



Seen



Soothed



Secure



# Validate the Feeling / Emotion

Identify the emotion and confirm.  
Show understanding for the emotion.

- *It sounds to me like you're feeling.... Is that right?*
- *I can understand why you're feeling...*
- *It makes sense that you feel...*
- *It makes sense that you think...*
- *You are having a sad/ tough/ yucky day.*
- *\_\_\_ must be difficult for you*
- *You have every right to feel that way*
- *I would feel that way too ...*
- *I can only imagine how \_\_\_ that must be*
- *It's completely normal to feel \_\_\_*



Safe



Seen



Soothed



Secure

# Validation

Validation: recognition or affirmation that a person, or their feelings or opinions are valid and worthwhile.

Validation IS...	Validation IS NOT...
Being present	Trying to fix or problem solve
Acceptance and respect	Agreement
Normalizing	Minimizing
Seeking to understand	Guessing and moving on
Listening for the underlying need	Giving advice



Safe



Seen



Soothed

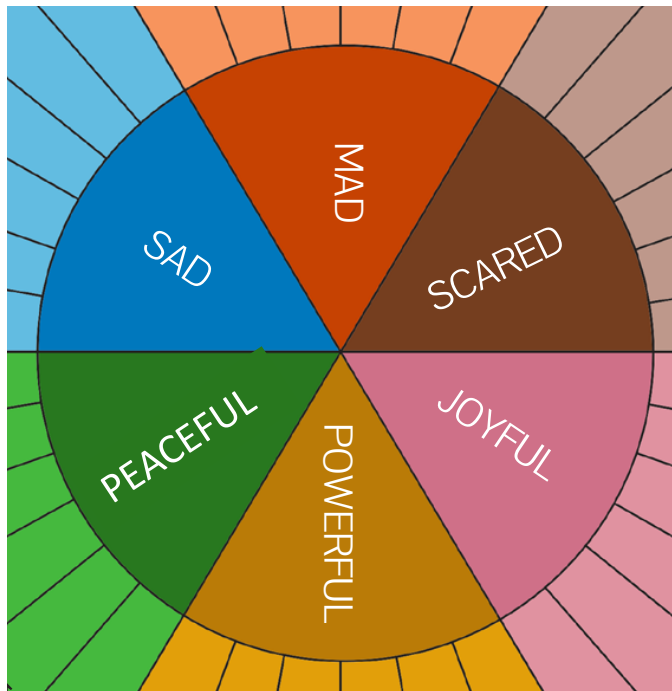


Secure

# Defuse & De-escalate

Think opposite core emotions...

Want to take power out of situation



- Take the blame...
- Apologize
  - *Will you forgive me for...*
- Don't argue
  - *You are right.*
- Go with the flow...
  - (Sing "Let it Go" to yourself)



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*For More Information*

## Understanding Emotional Connection & Communication

[caringkindnyc.org/  
 educationhub](http://caringkindnyc.org/educationhub)



# Decoding Behaviors & Reactions

What is reaction or behavior?  
Why is this a problem?

Why could it be happening?  
What's happening Inside the person?

Why could it be happening?  
What's happening outside the person?

What Reaction?



Why? Inside Person



Why? Inside Person



Why? Task



Why? Care Partner Approach



Where? Environment



How Change? Avoid?



What can you change?  
What strategies can you try next time?

What can you do to influence situation?  
What will you try?  
What else can you try?



WHAT?	WHY?		WHY?	WHY?	WHERE?
Action	Inside		Outside	Outside	Outside
BEHAVIOR	INSIDE PERSON		CARE PARTNER APPROACH	ACTIVITY, TASK	ENVIRONMENT
<p><i>Action? Reaction? Expression?</i></p> <p><i>Verbal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yelling</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Crying</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Humming</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Laughing</li> </ul> <p><i>Body</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sweating</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shivering</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Flinching</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Breathing fast</li> </ul> <p><i>Physical, Movements</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clapping</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tapping</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hitting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rocking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Restless</li> </ul> <p><i>Toward People</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pushing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Touching</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hugging</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grasping</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Caressing</li> </ul> <p><i>Toward Objects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Misuse</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Careful</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Forceful</li> </ul>	<p><i>Instincts &amp; Emotions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fear</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Anger</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grief</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Happy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Boredom</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relief, Satisfaction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore, Seek</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fulfillment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Connect/Relate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Care</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Play</li> </ul> <p><i>Physical &amp; Sensory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Health Condition</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Infection</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Poor Nutrition</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dehydration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Depression</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Over/Under Medicated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cold, Hot, Itchy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pain</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hungry, Thirsty</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dizzy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelmed</li> </ul>	<p><i>Background, Culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gender Roles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work Experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Faith Tradition</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Trauma</li> </ul> <p><i>Changing Abilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dementia Type</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dementia Stage</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Language Abilities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive Abilities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Physical Abilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Body Language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Body Position</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Calm</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stressed?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Slower Speed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Voice Tone</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Too slow/fast?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eye Contact</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Touch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stimulating</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Too Easy?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Too Hard?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set up</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tools</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lighting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Location</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Environment</li> </ul>	<p><i>Physical Space</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Too cluttered?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Over Stimulating? Under stimulating</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate Objects?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe items?</li> </ul> <p><i>Sensory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Too much noise - TV, radio</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lighting? Shadows? Glare?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Temperature</li> </ul> <p><i>Appeal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inviting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful Objects?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable Objects?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Homelike</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comforting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Joy? Happy</li> </ul> <p><i>Location</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place - Familiar? Strange?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Travel to/from?</li> </ul> <p><i>Social Space</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> People</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Animals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Friends? Enemies?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> TV Characters</li> </ul> <p><i>Time</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Too Early? Too Late?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> When tired?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Before/After meal?</li> </ul>

# DECODING REACTIONS & BEHAVIORS



**What is person doing? What is reaction/behavior? Briefly describe?**

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**What Actions/Behaviors did you see? Check options:**

- |                                   |   |                                   |                                    |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Verbal</i>                     | <i>Body</i>                             | <i>Physical Movements</i>         | <i>Toward People</i>               | <i>Toward Objects or Task</i>     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yelling  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweating       | <input type="checkbox"/> Clapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Pushing   | <input type="checkbox"/> Misuse   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crying   | <input type="checkbox"/> Shivering      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tapping  | <input type="checkbox"/> Touching  | <input type="checkbox"/> Careful  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humming  | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed        | <input type="checkbox"/> Hitting  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hugging   | <input type="checkbox"/> Forceful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laughing | <input type="checkbox"/> Flinching      | <input type="checkbox"/> Rocking  | <input type="checkbox"/> Grasping  |                                   |
|                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing fast | <input type="checkbox"/> Restless | <input type="checkbox"/> Caressing |                                   |

*Describe:* \_\_\_\_\_

---

**What may be going on inside or outside the person to cause a reaction? Check options:**

- |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <i>Instincts &amp; Emotions</i>           | <input type="checkbox"/> Cold, Hot, Itchy   | <i>CarePartner Approach</i>             | <i>Physical Space</i>                     | <i>Location</i>                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear             | <input type="checkbox"/> Pain               | <input type="checkbox"/> Body Language  | <input type="checkbox"/> Too cluttered?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Place - Familiar? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anger            | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue            | <input type="checkbox"/> Body Position  | <input type="checkbox"/> Over             | <input type="checkbox"/> Strange?          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grief            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hungry, Thirsty    | <input type="checkbox"/> Calm           | <input type="checkbox"/> Stimulating?     | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel to/from?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Happy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Dizzy              | <input type="checkbox"/> Stressed?      | Under                                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boredom          | <input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelmed        | <input type="checkbox"/> Slower Speed   | stimulating                               | <i>Social Space</i>                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relief,          |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Voice Tone     | <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate    | <input type="checkbox"/> Family            |
| Satisfaction                              | <i>Background, Culture</i>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Too slow/fast? | Objects?                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> People            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Explore, Seek    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Roles       | <input type="checkbox"/> Eye Contact    | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe items?    | <input type="checkbox"/> Animals           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fulfillment      | <input type="checkbox"/> Work Experience    | <input type="checkbox"/> Touch          | <input type="checkbox"/> Too much noise - | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends?          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connect/ Relate  | <input type="checkbox"/> Family             | <i>Activity/Task</i>                    | TV, radio                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Enemies?          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Care             | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith Tradition    | <input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting?        | <input type="checkbox"/> TV Characters     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Play             | <input type="checkbox"/> Trauma             | <input type="checkbox"/> Stimulating    | Shadows?                                  |  |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Too Easy?      | Glare?                                    | <i>Time</i>                                |
| <i>Physical &amp; Sensory</i>             | <i>Changing Abilities</i>                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Too Hard?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Temperature      | <input type="checkbox"/> Too Early? Too    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Condition | <input type="checkbox"/> Dementia Type      | <input type="checkbox"/> Set up         | <input type="checkbox"/> Inviting         | Late?                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infection        | <input type="checkbox"/> Dementia Stage     | <input type="checkbox"/> Tools          | <input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful       | <input type="checkbox"/> When tired?       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Nutrition   | <input type="checkbox"/> Language           | <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting       | Objects?                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Before/After      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dehydration      | Abilities                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable    | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable        | meal?                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depression       | <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive          | <input type="checkbox"/> Location       | Objects?                                  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over/Under       | Abilities                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment    | <input type="checkbox"/> Homelike         |  |
| Medicated                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Abilities |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Comforting       |  |

**How can you try to change the situation?**

**Brainstorm ideas!**

**What will you try?**

# Simplify Communication



Give the person your full attention making eye contact.



Talk slowly.



Simple sentences.



Pause and wait for response.



Give plenty of time



Acknowledge what the person is saying.



Go along with the person's beliefs.



Use words of encouragement

# Strategies for Caring Family & Friends

- *Speak directly to me. Do not talk to me as though you are speaking to a child.*
- *Ask me what I am experiencing, how I am feeling, and validate what I am saying.*
- *Treat me in the same way you would want to be treated in the same situation.*
- *Acknowledge that you do not totally understand but that you are trying.*
- *Pay attention to non-verbal cues and body language, such as eyes and hands.*



A BY US FOR US GUIDE

## Enhancing Communication

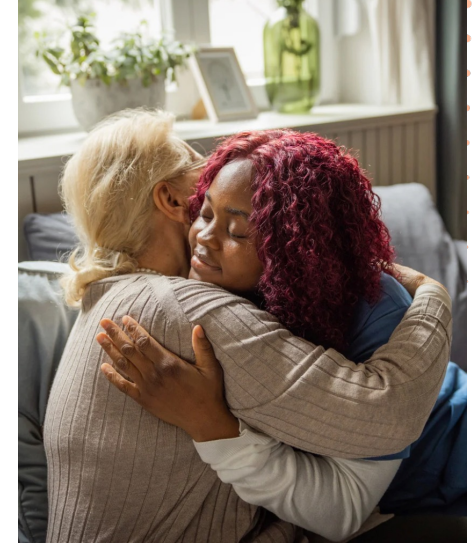
An inspirational guide  
for people living with dementia

SERIES 1

# Approach

Body Position

- Eye level
- Eye contact
- Touch

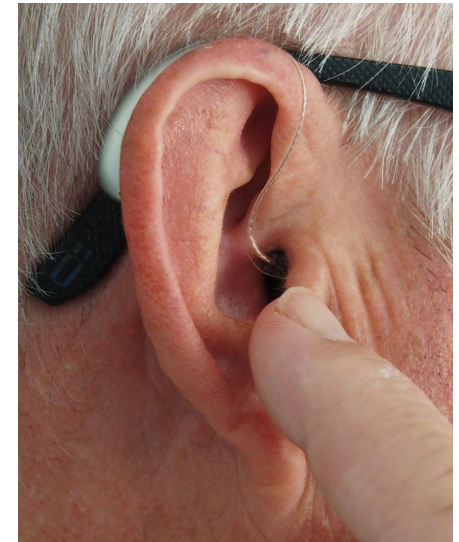


Emotions

- Calm
- Stress
- Comforting

Voice Tone

- Too Loud
- Too Soft
- Pitch



Pace

- Too Fast
- Too Slow
- Smooth



# Match the task to skill level



## LIST RECIPE STEPS



1. Boil Water
2. Add pasta & set timer for 10 minutes
3. Heat sauce and meatballs in separate pan
4. Cover and cook for 20 minutes
5. Drain pasta
6. Set pasta on plate
7. Cover pasta with sauce & meatballs
8. Sprinkle with cheese & basil

© Transition Australia



## Activity or Task



MEANINGFUL



STIMULATING



TOO HARD?  
TOO EASY?



SET UP FOR  
STAGE



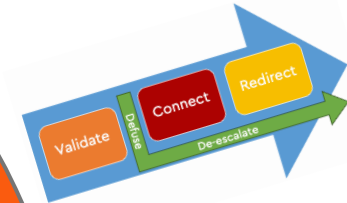
ENVIRONMENT

- Make sure activity is Meaningful (or at least enjoyable).
- Find stimulating activities
- Break the task into parts.
- Set out the items in advance.
- Arrange the items in the order they will be used.
- Allow more than enough time.
- Label objects or places (cabinets, drawers)
- Consider environment – warm, comfortable, good lighting
- Establish routines – repeat the same steps daily

Proactive  
Meaningful  
Engagement



Validate, Connect,  
Redirect, Defuse



Promote  
Joy &  
Resilience

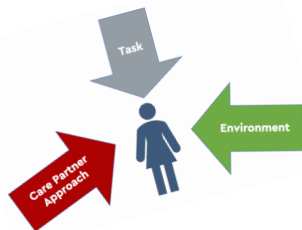


Respond to  
Reaction/  
Behavior



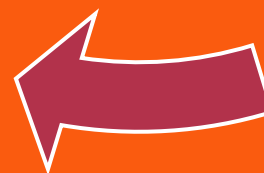
Adapt  
Approaches

Decode &  
Learn



Modify Task,  
Environment,  
Approach, Response

What's happening  
Inside? Outside?



# Promote Joy & Resilience

*Find something meaningful*

SPORTS, TRIVIA

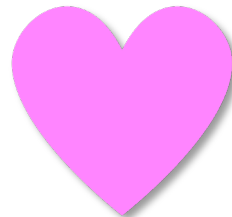
CURRENT EVENTS



WRITING, POETRY



ART, CRAFTS



COOKING, BAKING

REMINISCING

SPIRITUALITY

GAMES, PUZZLES



COGNITIVE STIMULATION

READING

DANCING, EXERCISE

PETS



MUSIC

HOME CHORES



OUTDOORS



# Meaningful Activities by Stage

Meaningful Activities by Stage		
Early (Pace)	Moderate (Simplify)	Late (Sensory)
<b>Art:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Painting, Coloring</li> <li>Watercolor</li> <li>Clay</li> <li>Collage</li> </ul>	<b>Art:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplify materials and steps for Painting, Clay, Collage, Coloring</li> </ul>	<b>Art:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide pictures of artwork. Talk about what they see, what colors, etc...</li> <li>Water painting from relish</li> </ul>
<b>Crafts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jewelry Making,</li> <li>Beading,</li> <li>Scrapbooking,</li> <li>Knitting/Crocheting</li> </ul>	<b>Crafts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplify materials and steps. Use pony beads and shoelace string</li> <li>Sort collage materials</li> <li>Look at pictures</li> </ul>	<b>Crafts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look at scrapbook pictures while listening to music</li> </ul>
<b>Board/Table Games:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cards</li> <li>Board Games</li> <li>Dice</li> <li>Dominos</li> </ul>	<b>Board/Table Games:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplify the steps/game &amp; provide 1:1</li> <li>Board Games</li> <li>Checkers, Dice</li> </ul>	<b>Board/Table Games:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matching pictures game</li> <li>Rolling the dice</li> <li>Shuffling cards</li> </ul>
<b>Cooking/Baking:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow a new recipe</li> <li>Share a family recipe</li> <li>Help with clean up</li> </ul>	<b>Cooking/Baking:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With supervision follow one step tasks</li> <li>Help with clean up</li> </ul>	<b>Cooking/Baking:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage the senses, watching food items, tasting, smell of food, touching vegetables fruits</li> </ul>
<b>Current Events:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading newspaper</li> <li>Listening to radio</li> <li>Watching news</li> <li>Engaging in discussion</li> </ul>	<b>Current Events:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being mindful of upsetting news</li> <li>Share newspaper</li> <li>Engage discussions of in news stories from the past</li> </ul>	<b>Current Events:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about your day and meaningful activities. Your joy and positive emotions will be felt</li> </ul>
<b>Dancing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play lively music</li> <li>Follow dance steps</li> </ul>	<b>Dancing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play lively music</li> <li>Follow easy dance</li> </ul>	<b>Dancing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1:1 Dancing with hands on assistance to slower music</li> </ul>
<b>Exercise:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow an exercise video at a moderate pace</li> <li>Add music</li> </ul>	<b>Exercise:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow an exercise video at a slower pace</li> <li>Add music</li> </ul>	<b>Exercise:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With assistance and hand over hand help, move to a slower pace</li> <li>Add music</li> </ul>
<b>Household:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Light cleaning</li> <li>Helping with laundry</li> <li>Set the table</li> </ul>	<b>Household:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Folding: ex socks, towels, napkins</li> <li>Sorting ex: laundry</li> </ul>	<b>Household:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Touching warm clothing out of the dryer</li> <li>Smell of detergent</li> </ul>
<b>Music:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chooses music</li> <li>Make music accessible i.e. radio with reminder for favorite station</li> <li>Alexa, google home</li> </ul>	<b>Music:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help play favorite music and talk about the past</li> </ul>	<b>Music:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play music at certain times of day to help during bathing, dressing, meals</li> <li>Play soothing music to help with "behaviors"</li> </ul>

Early (Pace)	Moderate (Simplify)	Late (Sensory)
<b>Outdoors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gardening</li> <li>Walking</li> <li>Visiting gardens, parks</li> </ul>	<b>Outdoors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watering plants</li> <li>Planting in soil</li> <li>Picking flowers</li> <li>Walking</li> </ul>	<b>Outdoors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smelling flowers</li> <li>Listening to birds</li> <li>Tasting herb garden</li> <li>Warmth of the sun</li> </ul>
<b>Pets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caring for pet i.e feeding, giving water, brushing</li> </ul>	<b>Pets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Petting, brushing with hand over hand</li> <li>Discuss pets together</li> </ul>	<b>Pets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring live pet within eyesight</li> <li>Use Stuffed animals, robotic pets</li> </ul>
<b>Puzzles:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crossword</li> <li>Word finding</li> <li>Jigsaw Puzzles</li> </ul>	<b>Puzzles:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large piece small number jigsaw puzzles</li> <li>Photo matching games</li> <li>Simple word finds</li> </ul>	<b>Puzzles:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have them join you in a game, show pictures, discuss/remindise about words.</li> </ul>
<b>Reading:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Books/ Short stories</li> <li>Magazines</li> <li>Newspapers</li> <li>Letters</li> </ul>	<b>Reading:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photography books</li> <li>Visual Magazines</li> <li>Short stories with large print</li> </ul>	<b>Reading:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read to the client</li> <li>Choose reading materials based on client's past interests</li> </ul>
<b>Religious/Spiritual:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prayer books</li> <li>Hymn Books</li> <li>Familiar religious items</li> </ul>	<b>Religious/Spiritual:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in religious songs</li> <li>Use religious items as visual cues &amp; discuss</li> </ul>	<b>Religious/Spiritual:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use religious items for visual and tactile cues</li> <li>Engage in religious songs</li> <li>Play sermons on tv</li> </ul>
<b>Sports:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watching/listening to sports</li> <li>Reading news sports section</li> <li>Playing catch games</li> </ul>	<b>Sports:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sports books and photographs</li> <li>Video highlights from historic games</li> <li>Sports puzzles &amp; games</li> </ul>	<b>Sports:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hands on sports equipment</li> <li>Smell baseball gloves; footballs</li> </ul>
<b>Trivia:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiar trivia questions</li> </ul>	<b>Trivia:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trivia with pictures, music, fill in the blank</li> </ul>	<b>Trivia:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reminiscence on favorite trivia categories</li> </ul>
<b>Reminiscing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photos, scrapbooks for recall</li> </ul>	<b>Reminiscing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pictures, scents, music for discussion</li> </ul>	<b>Reminiscing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pictures, scents, music</li> </ul>
<b>Watching TV/Movies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Let choose favorites</li> <li>Provide reminders for TV schedule</li> <li>Engage in discussion after</li> </ul>	<b>Watching TV/Movies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform when favorite shows are on</li> <li>May lose interest in long shows</li> <li>Movie musicals</li> </ul>	<b>Watching TV/Movies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play favorite show, be not to promote anxiety or fear</li> </ul>
<b>Writing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide writing materials</li> </ul>	<b>Writing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sign a card, stuff envelope</li> </ul>	<b>Writing:</b>





CaringKind Helpline: 646-744-2900  
caringkindnyc.org  
@caringkindnyc

## EDUCATION SEMINAR

*A free learning event for  
individuals, families and professionals*

LIVE WEBINAR

# Creative Connections

*Meaningful Engagement  
Across the Stages of Dementia*



When Alzheimer's or another form of dementia progresses and a person's abilities change, finding enjoyable activities that a person can still do can be challenging. Frustrations and conflicts often arise amidst couples and families when typical activities, tasks and hobbies become more difficult.

Join us for this seminar to explore:

- *Ways to engage a person in the early, middle and later stages of Alzheimer's or another dementia*
- *Creative and adapted activities that are meaningful and matched to a person's current abilities*
- *Strategies that foster connection, communication and quality of life for both the person living with dementia and their families and partners in care*

**Speaker: Olivia Cohen, MS, MT-BC, LCAT, CDP**

*Olivia Cohen is the Director of Early-Stage and Engagement Services at CaringKind. Olivia is a board-certified music therapist and licensed creative arts therapist with over 12 years of experience working in long-term care, healthcare, and with individuals living with Alzheimer's and dementia. Her work has been featured in publications such as The New York Times, Huffington Post, Chasing News, and Aging Today. Additionally, she has co-authored a chapter in the book "Creative Arts Therapies and the LGBTQ Community."*



**TO REGISTER:  
646-744-2900**

[caringkindnyc.org/education](http://caringkindnyc.org/education)



# For More Information

## *Creative Connections: Meaningful Engagement Across the Stages of Dementia*

[caringkindnyc.org/  
educationhub](http://caringkindnyc.org/educationhub)



# caringkind

Talk to a  
Navigator

**646-744-2900**



[www.caringkindnyc.org](http://www.caringkindnyc.org)



# Questions



**caringkind**

360 Lexington Ave, New York, NY

[CARINGKINDNYC.ORG](http://CARINGKINDNYC.ORG)

Helpline: 646-744-2900

@caringkindnyc

## Links for reference

**Helpline:** 646-744-2900

**Schedule a call with CaringKind Navigator:**

<https://outlook.office365.com/book/Appointments@cknyc.org/>

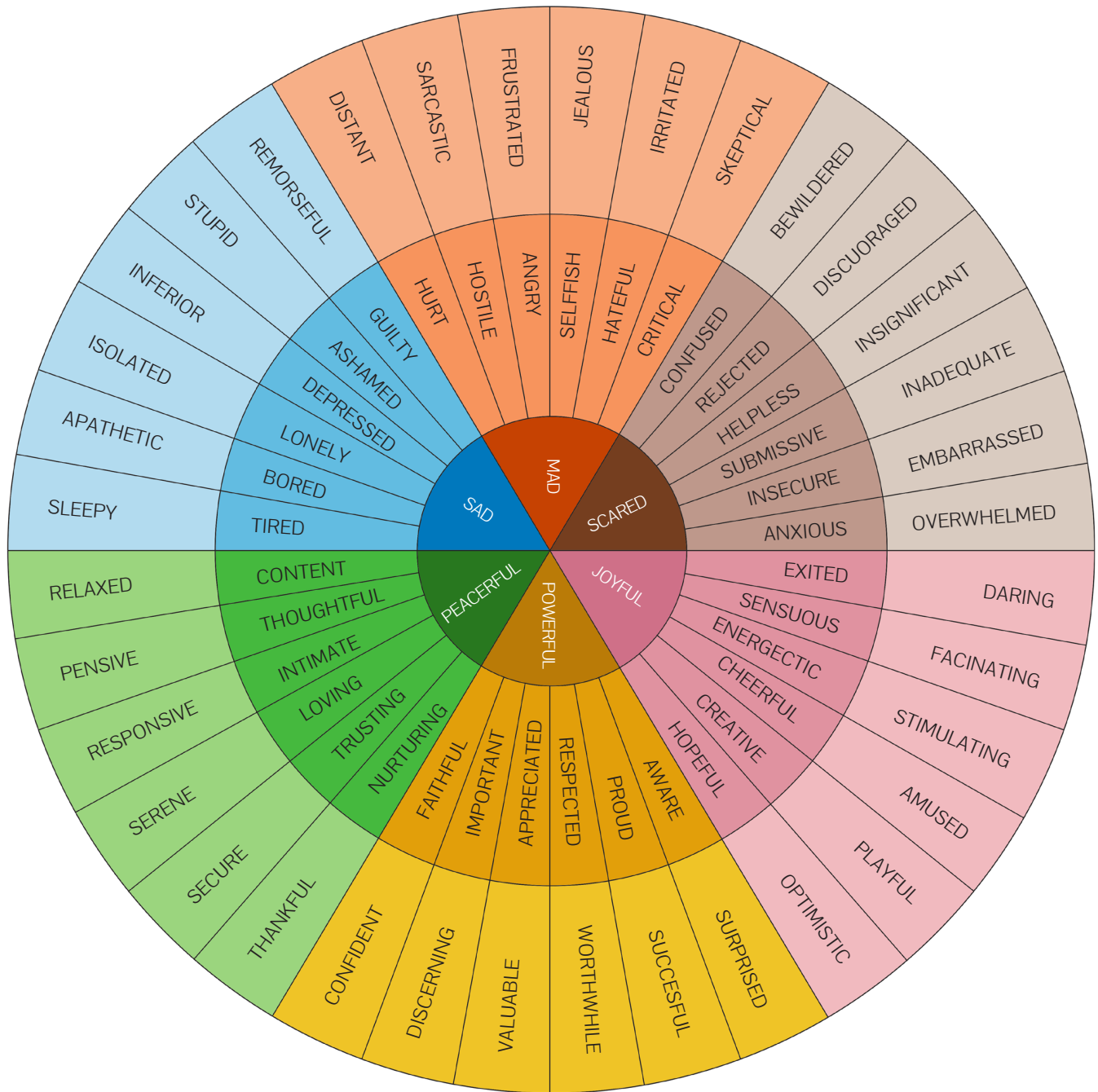
**CaringKind Website:** <https://caringkindnyc.org/>

**Education Calendar:**

<https://caringkindnyc.org/carepartnereducation/>

**Professional Education Seminars:**

<https://www.caringkindnyc.org/professionaleducation>



The Feeling Wheel is designed to help people in learning to recognize and communicate about their feelings. It consists of an inner circle with 5 sectors and two outer concentric circles. The sectors are each labeled at the center with the name of a primary feeling: sad, mad, scared, joyful, powerful, and peaceful. The outer rings contain names of secondary feelings related to the primary ones. The wheel helps people learn how to identify, to express, to generate, and to change feelings.

Source: Willcox, G. (1982). *The Feeling Wheel A Tool for Expanding Awareness of Emotion and Increasing Spontaneity and Intimacy*. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 12(4), 274-276



# DECODING REACTIONS & BEHAVIORS

WHAT?	WHY?		WHY?	WHY?	WHERE?
<i>Action</i>	<i>Inside</i>		<i>Outside</i>	<i>Outside</i>	<i>Outside</i>
BEHAVIOR	INSIDE PERSON		CARE PARTNER APPROACH	ACTIVITY, TASK	ENVIRONMENT
<p><i>Action?</i></p> <p><i>Reaction?</i></p> <p><i>Expression?</i></p> <p><i>Verbal</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yelling</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Crying</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Humming</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Laughing</p> <p><i>Body</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sweating</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Shivering</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Flinching</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Breathing fast</p> <p><i>Physical, Movements</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Clapping</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tapping</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hitting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Rocking</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Restless</p> <p><i>Toward People</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pushing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Touching</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hugging</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grasping</p> <p>Caressing</p> <p><i>Toward Objects</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Misuse</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Careful</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Forceful</p>	<p><i>Instincts &amp; Emotions</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fear</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Anger</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grief</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Happy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Boredom</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Relief, Satisfaction</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Explore, Seek</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fulfillment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Connect/Relate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Care</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Play</p> <p><i>Physical &amp; Sensory</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Health Condition</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Infection</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poor Nutrition</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dehydration</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Depression</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Over/Under Medicated</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cold, Hot, Itchy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pain</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hungry, Thirsty</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dizzy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelmed</p>	<p><i>Background, Culture</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gender Roles</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Work Experience</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Faith Tradition</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Trauma</p> <p><i>Changing Abilities</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dementia Type</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dementia Stage</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Language Abilities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive Abilities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Physical Abilities</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Body Language</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Body Position</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Calm</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Stressed?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Slower Speed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Voice Tone</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Too slow/fast?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Eye Contact</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Touch</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Stimulating</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Too Easy?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Too Hard?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set up</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tools</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lighting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Location</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environment</p>	<p><i>Physical Space</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Too cluttered?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Over Stimulating?</p> <p>Under stimulating</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate Objects?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe items?</p> <p><i>Sensory</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Too much noise - TV, radio</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lighting? Shadows? Glare?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Temperature</p> <p><i>Appeal</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inviting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful Objects?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable Objects?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Homelike</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Comforting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joy? Happy</p> <p><i>Location</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Place - Familiar? Strange?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Travel to/from?</p> <p><i>Social Space</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> People</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Animals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Friends? Enemies?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> TV Characters</p> <p><i>Time</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Too Early? Too Late?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> When tired?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Before/After meal?</p>

# DECODING REACTIONS & BEHAVIORS



**What is person doing? What is reaction/behavior? Briefly describe?**

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---

**What Actions/Behaviors did you see? Check options:**

- |                                   |   |                                   |                                    |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Verbal</i>                     | <i>Body</i>                             | <i>Physical Movements</i>         | <i>Toward People</i>               | <i>Toward Objects or Task</i>     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yelling  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweating       | <input type="checkbox"/> Clapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Pushing   | <input type="checkbox"/> Misuse   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crying   | <input type="checkbox"/> Shivering      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tapping  | <input type="checkbox"/> Touching  | <input type="checkbox"/> Careful  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humming  | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed        | <input type="checkbox"/> Hitting  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hugging   | <input type="checkbox"/> Forceful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laughing | <input type="checkbox"/> Flinching      | <input type="checkbox"/> Rocking  | <input type="checkbox"/> Grasping  |                                   |
|                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing fast | <input type="checkbox"/> Restless | <input type="checkbox"/> Caressing |                                   |

*Describe:* \_\_\_\_\_

---

**What may be going on inside or outside the person to cause a reaction? Check options:**

- |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <i>Instincts &amp; Emotions</i>           | <input type="checkbox"/> Cold, Hot, Itchy   | <i>CarePartner Approach</i>             | <i>Physical Space</i>                     | <i>Location</i>                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear             | <input type="checkbox"/> Pain               | <input type="checkbox"/> Body Language  | <input type="checkbox"/> Too cluttered?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Place - Familiar? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anger            | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue            | <input type="checkbox"/> Body Position  | <input type="checkbox"/> Over             | <input type="checkbox"/> Strange?          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grief            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hungry, Thirsty    | <input type="checkbox"/> Calm           | <input type="checkbox"/> Stimulating?     | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel to/from?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Happy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Dizzy              | <input type="checkbox"/> Stressed?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Under            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boredom          | <input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelmed        | <input type="checkbox"/> Slower Speed   | <input type="checkbox"/> stimulating      | <i>Social Space</i>                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relief,          |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Voice Tone     | <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate    | <input type="checkbox"/> Family            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfaction     | <i>Background, Culture</i>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Too slow/fast? | <input type="checkbox"/> Objects?         | <input type="checkbox"/> People            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Explore, Seek    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Roles       | <input type="checkbox"/> Eye Contact    | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe items?    | <input type="checkbox"/> Animals           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fulfillment      | <input type="checkbox"/> Work Experience    | <input type="checkbox"/> Touch          | <input type="checkbox"/> Too much noise - | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends?          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connect/ Relate  | <input type="checkbox"/> Family             |   | <input type="checkbox"/> TV, radio        | <input type="checkbox"/> Enemies?          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Care             | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith Tradition    | <i>Activity/Task</i>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting?        | <input type="checkbox"/> TV Characters     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Play             | <input type="checkbox"/> Trauma             | <input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful     | <input type="checkbox"/> Shadows?         |  |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Stimulating    | <input type="checkbox"/> Glare?           | <i>Time</i>                                |
| <i>Physical &amp; Sensory</i>             | <i>Changing Abilities</i>                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Too Easy?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Temperature      | <input type="checkbox"/> Too Early? Too    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Condition | <input type="checkbox"/> Dementia Type      | <input type="checkbox"/> Too Hard?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Inviting         | <input type="checkbox"/> Late?             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infection        | <input type="checkbox"/> Dementia Stage     | <input type="checkbox"/> Set up         | <input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful       | <input type="checkbox"/> When tired?       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Nutrition   | <input type="checkbox"/> Language           | <input type="checkbox"/> Tools          | <input type="checkbox"/> Objects?         | <input type="checkbox"/> Before/After      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dehydration      | <input type="checkbox"/> Abilities          | <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting       | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable        | <input type="checkbox"/> meal?             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depression       | <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive          | <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable    | <input type="checkbox"/> Objects?         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over/Under       | <input type="checkbox"/> Abilities          | <input type="checkbox"/> Location       | <input type="checkbox"/> Homelike         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medicated        | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Abilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment    | <input type="checkbox"/> Comforting       |  |

*Notes:* \_\_\_\_\_

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**How can you try to change the situation? Brainstorm ideas!**

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**What will you try?** \_\_\_\_\_

---