

STUDENT HANDOUT
Responding to an Individual Experiencing Cognitive Challenges

PURPOSE:

- To help you apply what you have learned in this course to your work with individuals experiencing cognitive challenges.
- To assist you to identify the consequences of your communications, actions, and interactions.
- To help you to increase your effectiveness in working with individuals experiencing cognitive challenges.

DIRECTIONS:

Choose two separate interactions you have had with individuals experiencing cognitive challenges. Briefly document each interaction, what happened, and how you responded. You may use a graph like the one on the following page to document your two interactions.

For each interaction that you document, write your reflections on the incident using the outline on the next page and identify what you have learned. This will assist you in future to increase your effectiveness with individuals experiencing cognitive challenges.

EXAMPLE: Documentation of Interactions

| Situation | My response | Consequences of my actions | Effectiveness of my actions | What the client's behaviour may have been communicating |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Mrs. S. kept asking me over and over where she was and when her husband would be coming to get her. | I told her I had already answered her question three times in the past half hour and the answer was still the same. I also reminded her that her husband had died several years ago. | Mrs. S. looked distraught and anxious, wringing her hands and pacing about the hallway. | Not very because Mrs. S. seemed even more anxious and confused. She kept asking the same question to whomever she encountered. | I'm feeling lost. I want to see someone I recognize who will care for me. |
| Mr. T. kept wiping the kitchen counter over and over again, and it didn't seem like he was going to stop. | I asked Mr. T. why he kept wiping the counter. | Mr. T. looked confused and troubled and continued to wipe the counter for several more minutes. | Not very since he kept wiping the counter and seemed even more agitated. | Need to expend nervous energy. Unable to stop the behaviour on his own. |

For each interaction identify:

- Why your response was or was not effective. How did you know it was effective or not effective?
- Make a list of other responses you might have made that would be effective in the situation. Think of as many ideas as you can. Base your suggestions on what you've learned in this course and information you have gained from other health team members or other sources.
- How does knowledge of the person as a unique individual – with a past, present, and future – help you to be more effective when caring for clients experiencing cognitive challenges?
- Identify what you have learned from these two interactions that will help you be more effective when working with individuals experiencing cognitive challenges.