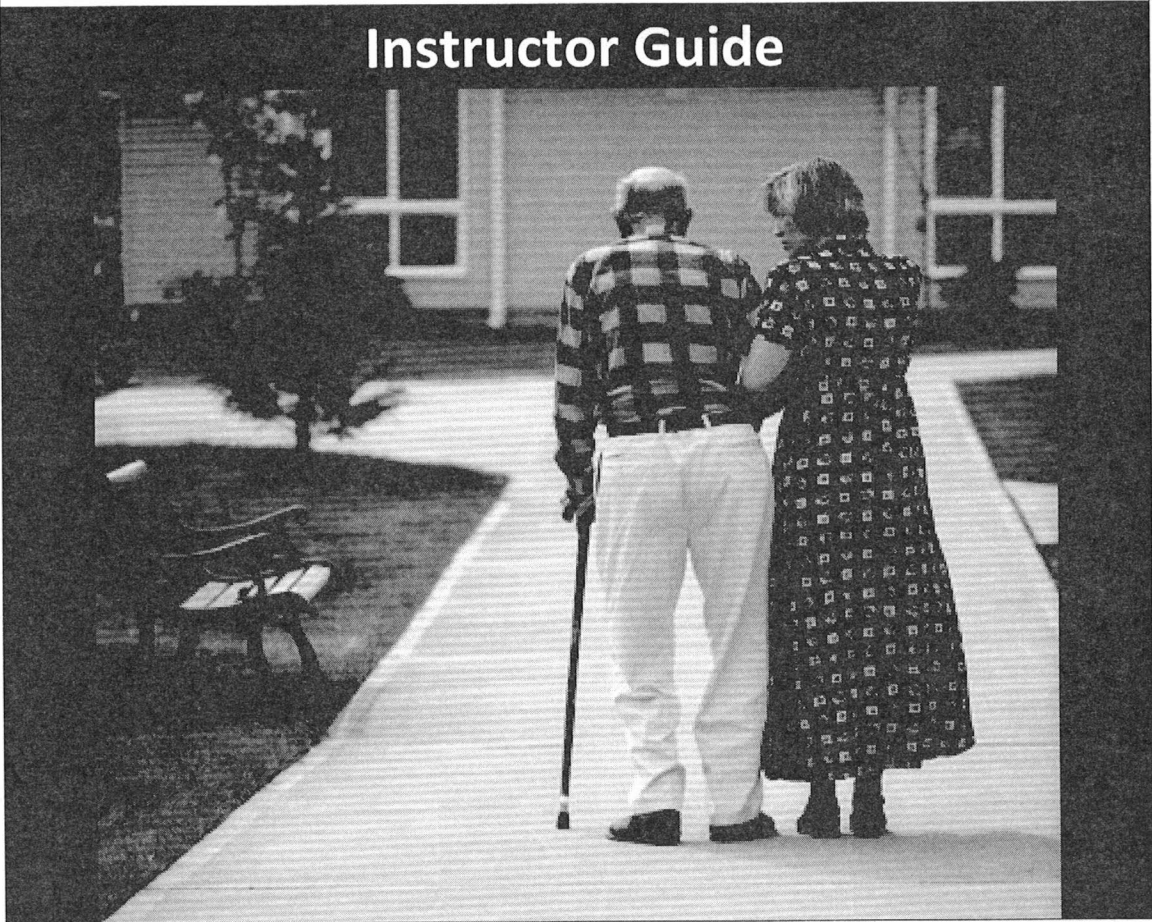


Dementia Care: Sundowning

Instructor Guide



UPDATED JUNE 22, 2011



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INSTRUCTOR GUIDE:
DEMENTIA CARE: SUNDOWNING

Overview	This module defines and demonstrates the manifestations of sundowning behavior. In this module we will address the caregivers role in successfully managing these behaviors, successful techniques and interventions, and implementing appropriate and enjoyable activities.
Video(s)	"Dementia Care: Sundowning" (23 minutes)
Special Supplies	None
Learning Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Common behaviors exhibited by residents with dementia;2. What is sundowning;3. Strategies for care staff to lessen the behaviors of sundowning;4. Activities.

QUIZ: DEMENTIA CARE: SUNDOWNING

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. What does the term sundowning refer to?
 - a. People who feel tired after sunset
 - b. People with dementia that have behavior problems in the late afternoon and evening hours
 - c. People who enjoy watching sunsets
 - d. None of the above

2. The symptoms of Alzheimer's disease include deficits in:
 - a. Memory
 - b. Visual-spatial orientation
 - c. Concentration
 - d. All of the above

3. Which of the following may not describe a resident with sundowning behavior in the late afternoon or evening?
 - a. Suspicious
 - b. Playful
 - c. Confused
 - d. Agitated

4. Some of the causes of sundowning may include:
 - a. Lack of evening activities
 - b. Difficulty seeing at night
 - c. Gender
 - d. Both "a" and "b"

5. Which of the following statements best describes a care provider's role in caring for a resident with sundowning?
- a. Provide a calm environment and activities
 - b. Force the resident to calm themselves down using a firm tone of voice
 - c. Ignore the resident's behavior because it is just a plea for attention
 - d. None of the above
6. Some sundowning interventions include:
- a. Providing enough daytime activities
 - b. Monitoring the resident's diet
 - c. Removing or preventing environmental causes
 - d. All of the above
7. If a resident is showing symptoms of sundowning and is becoming increasingly agitated with a particular caregiver, the best solution is to:
- a. Talk with a commanding tone of voice until the resident changes their behavior
 - b. Threaten an appropriate form of disciplinary action
 - c. Ask the caregiver to move away and bring a different caregiver in
 - d. All of the above
8. Which of the following may contribute to success in managing sundowning behavior?
- a. Small groups
 - b. Physical exercise
 - c. Stimulating the senses
 - d. All of the above
9. What is the best way for a caregiver to respond while a resident is experiencing symptoms of Sundowning?

QUIZ KEY: DEMENTIA CARE: SUNDOWNING

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9. What is the best way for a caregiver to respond while a resident is experiencing symptoms of Sundowning?

- **Talking soothingly/calmly to the resident or stay quiet.**
- **Try to isolate them from whatever is causing the reaction. For example, you may take them for a walk, or you may take them to a room with soothing music playing.**
- **If they are having a reaction to a specific caregiver it is often best for that caregiver to step away and let another caregiver intervene.**

Certificate of Completion

THIS IS TO RECOGNIZE

FOR DEDICATION TO QUALITY RESIDENT CARE
THROUGH EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

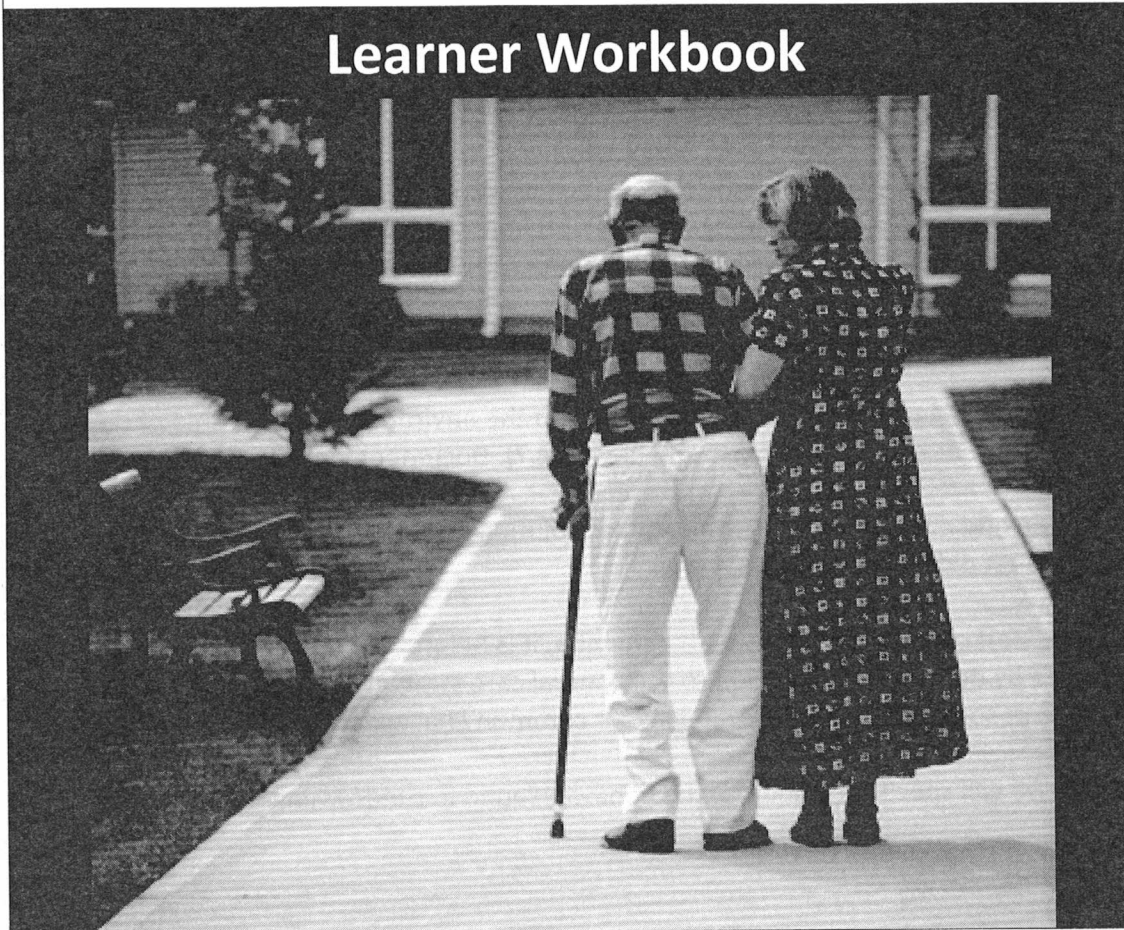
DEMENTIA CARE: SUNDOWNING

Instructor Signature

Date

Dementia Care: Sundowning

Learner Workbook



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SUNDOWNING

People with dementia exhibit some common specific behaviors, meaning how they act and react. Some common behaviors seen in people with dementia include:

- Wandering and elopement
- Sundowning
- Anxiety, agitation, and/or aggression
- Confusion
- Repetition
- Communication difficulties
- Suspicion
- Sleep problems

Difficult behaviors can be related to many things, such as physical discomfort, frustration, complicated tasks, unfamiliar surroundings, or overstimulation in a noisy environment. To help you manage difficult behaviors in a resident, it is helpful to take a three step approach.

1. Remain alert to identify early signs of a developing difficult behavior.
2. Identify possible triggers (e.g., What is happening in the environment, what time of day is it, what is the resident being asked to do and how, etc.?). Document identified triggers.
3. Try a solution and evaluate the outcome. If that solution doesn't work, try another. Document what did/did not work.

As a direct care staff caring for persons with dementia, it is helpful to know how your residents may be affected by dementia. In addition to the general care strategies we discussed above, let's take a look at some specific care strategies for common challenges.

In this module we will specifically address the behavior found in sundowning.

What Is Sundowning

Sundowning is a behavior frequently seen in residents with dementia. Sundowning refers to a state of confusion at the end of the day and into the night. They may become demanding, suspicious, upset or disoriented, and/or pace or wander.



While experts are unsure how or why sundowning occurs, they suspect that the problem of late afternoon confusion may be due to:

- Fatigue at the end of the day so the person cannot cope with stress as well
- Low lighting that causes the person to become confused
- Increased shadows
- Less activities to keep the person occupied

Confusion and restlessness may occur because the brain can no longer sort the cues in the environment.

Strategies

Some suggestions for direct care staff to lessen the behaviors of sundowning are:

- Make afternoon and evening hours less hectic.
- Schedule appointments, trips, and activities such as baths or showers early in the day.
- If a resident tends to pace or wander in the evening, you may want to arrange at least one or two brisk walks during the day.
- Discourage napping during the day if nighttime sleeplessness is a problem.
- Reduce consumption of foods and beverages with caffeine.
- Reduce the level of noise from radios or televisions. Confine noisier activities to another area of the Community. Control the number of people who visits in the evening hours.
- Provide good lighting to reduce the person's confusion from poor lighting and/or shadows.



Activities

An outstanding activity program can be very helpful when managing challenging behaviors. Activities you may implement that our residents with dementia may enjoy include:

- Dancing and/or singing
- Walks around the garden
- Visiting pets
- Reminiscence



It is important to learn and know your resident's preferences and desires. Activities for residents with dementia, should be positive and enjoyable.

The way to design activities that are geared for success is by the following:

- Know your resident's limitations
- Know your resident's strengths
- Communicate with the Activity Director
- Plan ahead



CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: DEMENTIA CARE: SUNDOWNING

Some of the common behaviors exhibited by residents who experience sundowning include:

- A. Suspicion
- B. Agitation
- C. Confusion or disorientation
- D. Pacing and wandering
- E. All of the above

Explain your answer:



CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: DEMENTIA CARE: SUNDOWNING

Below, list some techniques that a direct care staff may use in order to manage sundowning behavior:

Explain your answer:

