

# Caregivers' Cove

Some caregivers go through rough patches as seniors they care for develop challenging or irregular behaviours.

## Getting The Message

All behaviours communicate a message, even challenging ones<sup>1</sup>:

- Use positive phrases, e.g. say "Let's..." instead of "Don't..."
- Non-verbal gestures can speak louder than words<sup>2</sup>. A smile or a gentle voice helps you to keep the connection.
- Ask yourself - What might the senior be trying to communicate?

## Causes of Irregular Behaviours

A senior could present irregular or challenging behaviours due to unmet needs<sup>2</sup>.

### Physical

- Is there any body pain, discomfort or undetected illness?
- Poor vision or hearing can cause misunderstandings. When should the vision or hearing be checked?
- Some mental illness e.g. dementia, can distort one's sense of reality. Consult a doctor if in doubt.

### Social

- Is the senior getting restless because they are bored?
- Help the senior to start a suitable hobby or be involved in regular chats and family activities.
- Changes in routines can be upsetting. Prepare the senior ahead when changes are expected.

### Psychological

- Seniors often feel less useful as age catches up. They may feel frustrated more easily.
- Acknowledge their feelings, make them feel respected and help them adjust along the way.



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**Building Stronger Communities, Together**

1. "How to cope with his/her behaviours?", AIC Dementia Caregiver Booklet, P23

2. "Behaviours of Concern", AIC Dementia Caregiver Booklet, P24.

3. "Is Nonverbal Communication a Numbers Game?" by Jeff Thompson,

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/beyond-words/201109/is-nonverbal-communication-numbers-game>, 13 Jul 2020