

THE EMPOWERED CAREGIVER SERIES

RESPONDING TO DEMENTIA-RELATED BEHAVIORS

An education program presented by the Alzheimer's Association®



Participant's Guide

ALZHEIMER'S  ASSOCIATION®

The Empowered Caregiver: Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors Participant's Guide

Introduction





The Empowered Caregiver

Building Foundations of Caregiving

Supporting Independence

Communicating Effectively

Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors

Exploring Care and Support Services

Learning Objectives

- Describe how dementia can cause changes in a person's behavior.
- List possible triggers for dementia-related behaviors.
- Compare non-medical versus medical ways to address behaviors.
- Explain the four-step approach for managing behaviors.



Understanding Behavior Changes



What is dementia-related behavior?



- It's like an alarm telling you a need is not being met. Examples include feeling unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Behaviors are not always the same. The person may have "good" and "bad" days.
- The person living with dementia cannot control their behavior.



What causes changes in behavior?



- The disease causes brain cells to break down.
- These changes in the brain make it harder for the person to understand the world around them.
- The person may have trouble knowing what's real, what's safe and what is the right thing for them to do.



Behaviors are a Form of Communication



**Behaviors are a
Form of Communication**

Behaviors are a Form of Communication



- People living with dementia react to what they think, feel or need from the people and the world around them. These reactions are a form of communication.
- Caregivers must connect with the person to figure out what they are trying to tell you with their behavior.
- These behaviors are not related to the person's true feelings about you or other people. Try not to take them personally.

Common Dementia-Related Behaviors



Getting lost or wandering.
The person may walk or move around with or without a known reason.



Aggression and anger.
The person may have verbal or physical outbursts.




Anxiety and agitation.
The person may show feelings of restlessness.




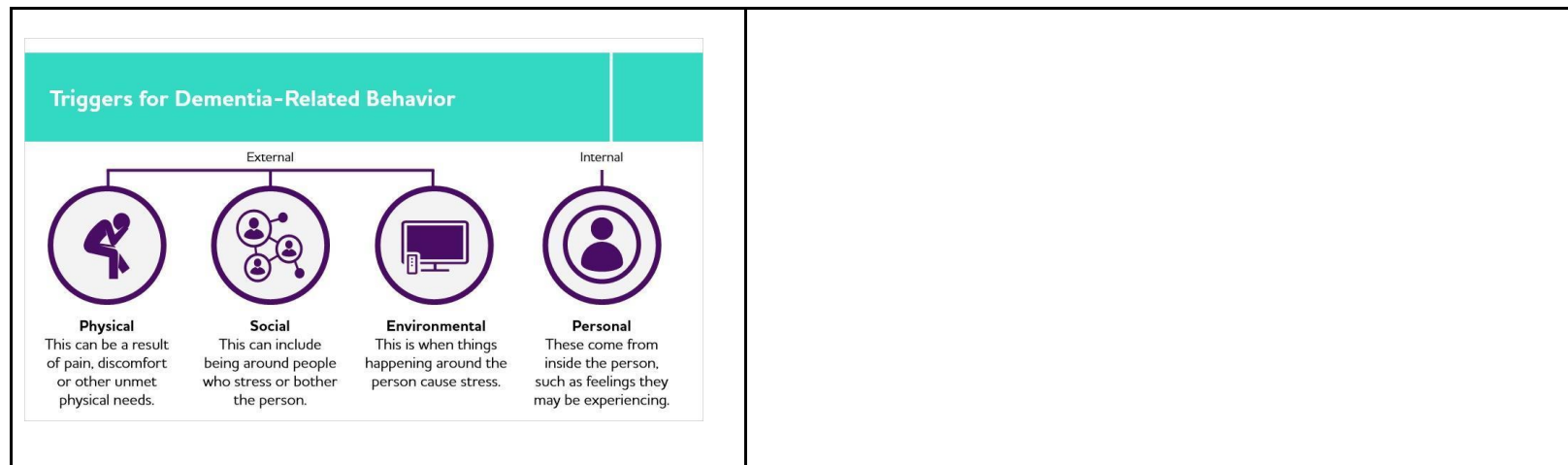
Suspicion and delusions.
They may believe things that are not true.



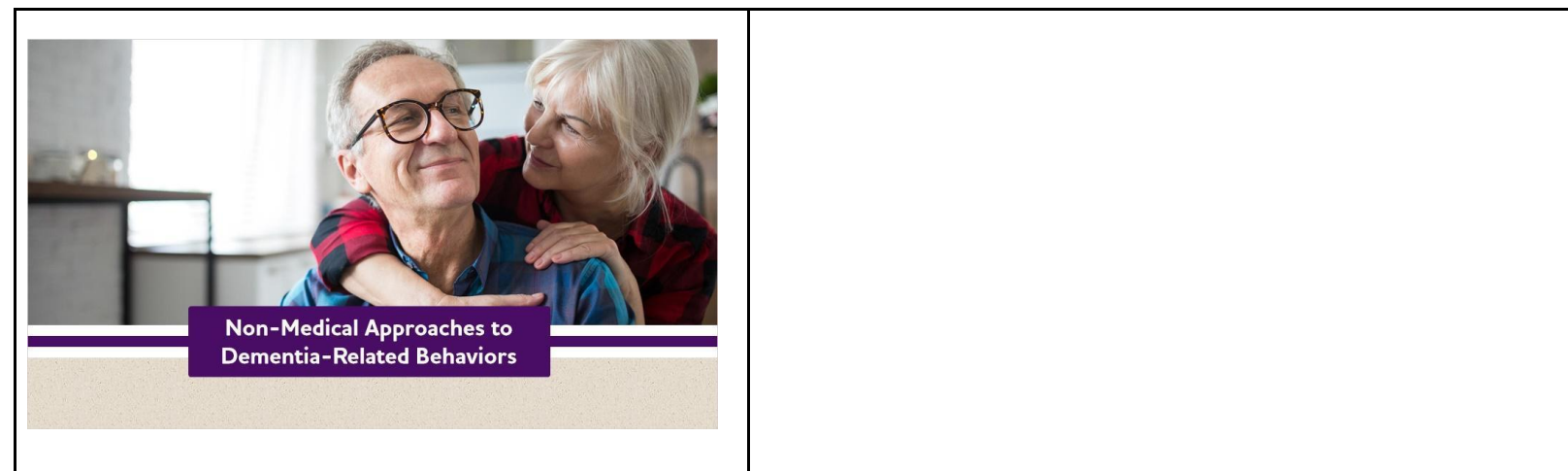
<div>Knowledge Check</div> <div>Wandering only happens in the early stage of the disease.</div> <div><input type="radio"/> True <input type="radio"/> False</div>		
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Triggers for Dementia-Related Behavior

 <div>Triggers for Dementia-Related Behavior</div>	
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Non-Medical Approaches to Dementia-Related Behaviors

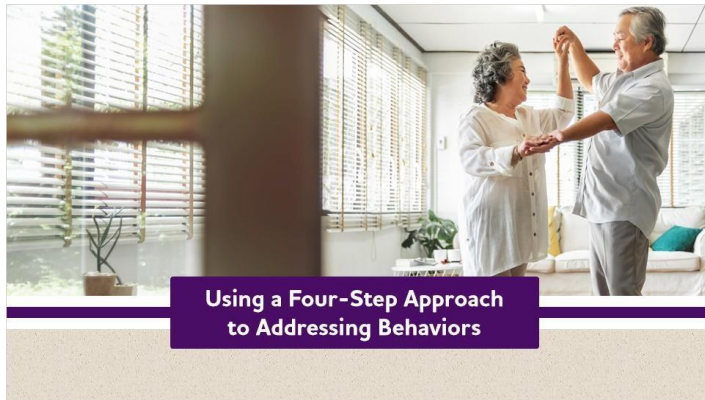


Non-Medical Approaches to Dementia-Related Behaviors



- A non-medical approach should always come first.
- It should focus on giving physical and emotional comfort.
- This approach can help identify and meet the needs of a person who has trouble expressing themselves.
- Use what you know about the person to help manage or reduce the behavior.

Using a Four-Step Approach to Addressing Behaviors



Using a Four-Step Approach
to Addressing Behaviors

Four-step approach to addressing behaviors



- 1 Detect and connect
- 2 Take care of physical needs
- 3 Help with emotional needs
- 4 Review and plan for next time

Four-Step Approach to Addressing Behaviors

1

Detect and connect



- Use what you know about the person to try and understand their needs or feelings.
- Join the person in their reality. It will help you understand what they are trying to express.
- Approach the person calmly, quietly and with respect as you figure out the situation.
- Avoid correcting the person.



Four-Step Approach to Addressing Behaviors

1

Detect and connect



Ask yourself these questions to identify the need behind the behavior:

- Who was there when the behavior took place?
- What happened just before or after the behavior began?
- When does the behavior usually happen?
- Where did the behavior happen?
- How did I react?



Four-Step Approach to Addressing Behaviors

2

Take care of physical needs



Always start by looking for needs connected to medical issues or physical pain.

To identify and address physical needs:

- Check what may be causing physical discomfort. Maybe the person is wearing uncomfortable clothing or is hungry. Maybe there is too much activity in the room.
- Make changes to make the person more comfortable.
- Contact the person's doctor about any signs of pain or medical problems.



Four-Step Approach to Addressing Behaviors

3

Help with emotional needs



Think about how the person might be feeling in the situation.

Tips to help address the person's feelings:

- Focus on possible emotions instead of the facts of the situation.
- Offer comfort. Let them know you are there, you are safe together and you are trying to make them more comfortable.
- Redirect their energy into a more relaxing activity. Find something that gives them joy.
- If they don't respond to the things you are trying, let it go. Try the approach another time.



Four-Step Approach to Addressing Behaviors

4

Review and plan for next time



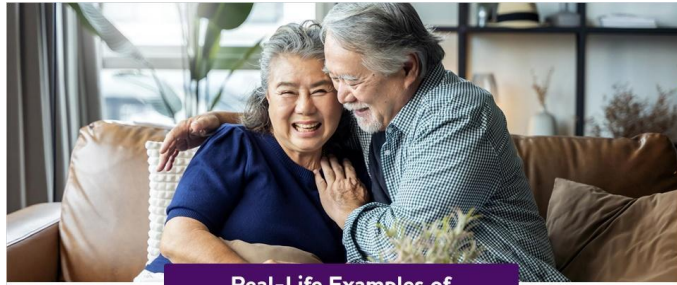
Go back to the "detect and connect" step. Think about what worked and what didn't.

To help plan for next time, think about:

- What are the warning signs that the behavior may be coming back?
- What responses work well? And in what order?
- When will you need to respond?
- How can you tell if your approach worked?
- Who else can help?



Real-Life Examples of the Four-Step Approach



Real-Life Examples of
the Four-Step Approach

Four-Step Approach in Action



Anxiety
and agitation.



Aggression and anger.



Suspicion
and delusions.

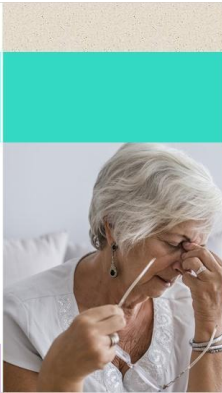


Getting lost or
wandering.

Anxiety and agitation

Situations that cause anxiety and agitation:

- Moving to a new residence, such as a nursing home.
- Changes in the environment, like travel, hospitalization or houseguests.
- Changes in caregiver arrangements.
- Believing that something is a threat.
- Feeling afraid or tired from trying to make sense of the world around them.



Let's apply Step 1: Detect and Connect to a real-life situation.

Eugene is living with dementia. He lives in a quiet apartment with his daughter, Denise. Eugene spends most days in the living room doing jigsaw puzzles. Denise's sister and her young children visit from out of town. The kids are noisy and running around the apartment. Eugene looks anxious and does not want to come out of his room.

- 1 **Detect and connect**
- 2 Take care of physical needs
- 3 Help with emotional needs
- 4 Review and plan for next time

Let's apply Step 1: Detect and Connect to a real-life situation.

How could Denise detect and connect with Eugene?

Select all that apply.

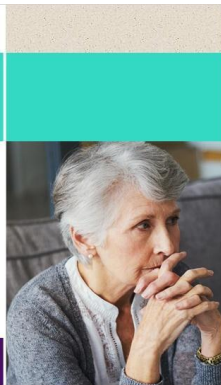


- ☐ 1. Try to see the situation from Eugene's perspective.
- ☐ 2. Think about when Eugene's behavior started.
- ☐ 3. Consider if having noisy, young children in the apartment is making Eugene feel anxious.
- ☐ 4. Get angry and assume Eugene is just being difficult

Aggression and anger


Situations that can lead to aggression:

- Physical discomfort.
- Environmental factors.
- Poor communication.



<div data-bbox="279 203 951 253" data-label="Section-Header"> <p>Let's apply Step 2: Take Care of Physical Needs to a real-life situation.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="296 345 646 488" data-label="Text"> <p>Sonia is living with Alzheimer's. She lives with her son, Hector, who hired a home care aide to help with Sonia's needs. Recently, Sonia has been yelling at the aide during bath time. Hector recalls the aide telling him last week that Sonia fell while getting out of the bathtub.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="667 345 926 503" data-label="List-Group"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Detect and connect 2 Take care of physical needs 3 Help with emotional needs 4 Review and plan for next time </div>	
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<div data-bbox="279 699 951 750" data-label="Section-Header"> <p>Let's apply Step 2: Take Care of Physical Needs to a real-life situation.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="289 816 663 862" data-label="Text"> <p>How can Hector take care of Sonia's physical needs first to address her aggression? Select all that apply.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="699 755 951 920" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="308 941 758 1037" data-label="List-Group"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Check for any injuries from Sonia's recent fall. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Talk to Sonia's doctor. Ask the doctor to check for an injury. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Hire a different aide to help with Sonia. </div>	
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<div><h3>Suspicion and delusions</h3><p>Situations that can lead to suspicion:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• The person's wallet is empty.• The person forgets that they moved an item from one place to another.• A caregiver moves things to another place in the home when cleaning.</div>	
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<div><p>Let's apply Step 3: Help with Emotional Needs to a real-life situation.</p><div><p>Clara is 85 years old and living with Alzheimer's disease. She is living with her daughter, Irene. Recently, Clara has been nervously walking around the house. She looks out all of the windows in the afternoons. She will often tell Irene, "Those people are out there again. They came in here last night and took my purse." Irene tells Clara that no one has broken in and her purse is in the closet. However, Clara keeps walking around the house and is becoming even more upset.</p></div><div><ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Detect and connect2 Take care of physical needs3 Help with emotional needs4 Review and plan for next time</div></div>	
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Let's apply Step 3: Help with Emotional Needs to a real-life situation.

How can Irene help with emotional needs when Clara has these suspicions and delusions? **Select all that apply.**

☐


1. Irene can distract Clara by asking her to set the table for dinner.

☐

2. Irene can reassure Clara that she is safe and offer to check that all doors in the house are locked.

☐

3. Irene can listen carefully to Clara's accusations and say that she is taking the problem seriously.



Wandering


Situations that can lead to wandering:

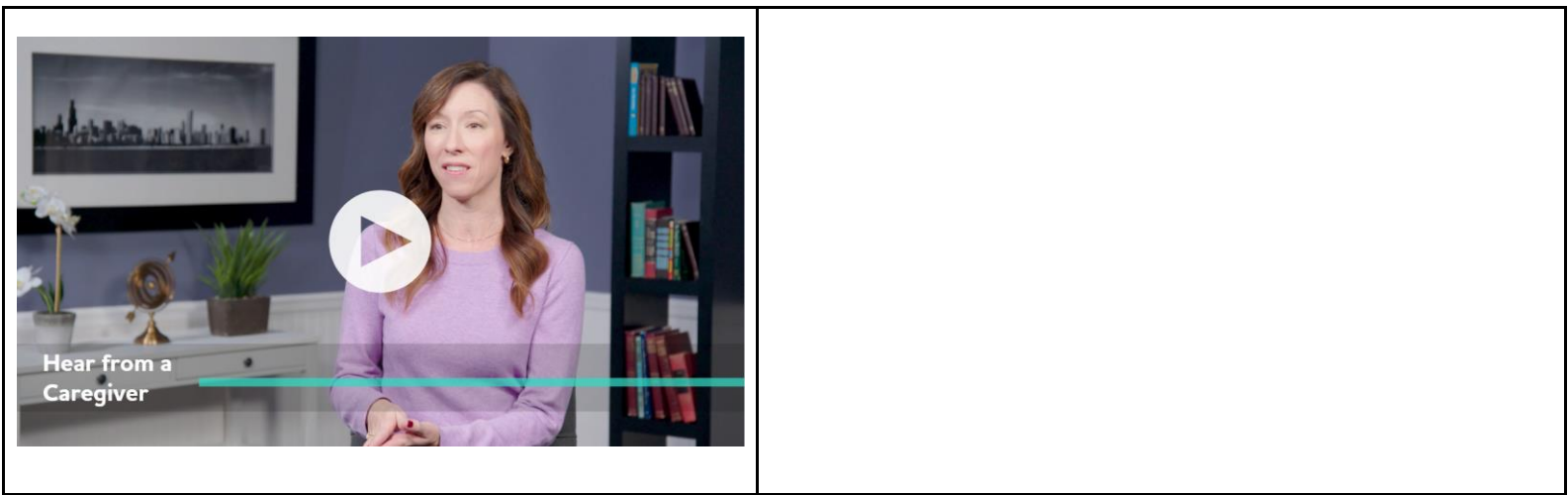
- Having physical discomfort or restlessness.
- Feeling bored.
- Unmet needs, such as using the toilet or being hungry.






<p>Let's apply Step 4: Review and Plan for Next Time to a real-life situation.</p>	
<p>Mai Ling is 69 years old and living with Alzheimer's disease. She lives with her son, Kenji, his wife and their two young children. Mai Ling ran her own flower shop before she retired. Kenji starts to notice that Mai Ling walks back and forth when she is in the yard and seems anxious. Once, she tried to leave the yard when the family was outside with her. She tried to go into the neighbor's garden.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Detect and connect 2 Take care of physical needs 3 Help with emotional needs 4 Review and plan for next time

<p>Let's apply Step 4: Review and Plan for Next Time to a real-life situation.</p>					
<p>Since there is a chance she might try to leave the yard again, how can Mai Ling's family plan for next time? Select all that apply.</p>					
<table border="0"> <tr> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Stay connected with Mai Ling while spending time outside. Support her with simple activities to reduce boredom. </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Make the yard more attractive to Mai Ling's interests. Plant flowers she likes or decorate with items that might be found in a garden. </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Avoid taking Mai Ling outside to spend time in the yard. </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Tell the neighbor that Mai Ling is interested in their garden due to her former career. Make sure they have the family's phone number so they can call if they find Mai Ling in their garden. </td> </tr> </table>		<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Stay connected with Mai Ling while spending time outside. Support her with simple activities to reduce boredom.	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Make the yard more attractive to Mai Ling's interests. Plant flowers she likes or decorate with items that might be found in a garden.	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Avoid taking Mai Ling outside to spend time in the yard.	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Tell the neighbor that Mai Ling is interested in their garden due to her former career. Make sure they have the family's phone number so they can call if they find Mai Ling in their garden.
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Medical Approaches to Dementia-Related Behaviors

Some behaviors are triggered by a critical medical need. Examples include:

- **Drug side effects.** Side effects from prescription drugs can affect behavior. So can interactions among drugs.
- **Discomfort from infections or other conditions.** The person may not be able to communicate pain connected to a common illness or condition. Examples include a urinary tract infection, discomfort from needing to use the toilet, feeling feverish or having chills.
- **Uncorrected hearing or vision problems.** These can lead to confusion, frustration and feeling alone.



<div><h2>Medical Approaches to Dementia-Related Behaviors</h2><p>Medication</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to a doctor if you think there is a medical problem. The doctor can decide if the person needs medication.• Some doctors may prescribe antipsychotic medications. This is to reduce and control symptoms like delusions and hallucinations.• Always talk with the doctor about risks and benefits of any medications before making a decision to use them.</div>	
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Take-Home Activity

<div><h3>Take-Home Activity</h3><p>Effectively Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors</p><h4>Effectively Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors</h4><p>Communication and dementia-related behaviors are connected. Dementia-related behaviors can be one way a person living with dementia communicates their needs. At first, it may be hard to understand what a person is trying to tell you with their behavior. However, it is important to try to understand what's causing the behavior so you can give the right support.</p><p>● Read Manuel's story below. See how his wife, Olivia, used a four-step approach to understand what Manuel was communicating with his dementia-related behavior and respond in a way that gave him the right support.</p><p>Manuel is living with dementia and having trouble finding the right words when trying to communicate. He used to own a restaurant but is retired now. He lives with his wife, Olivia, and has one son, Peter, who lives out of state. Lately, after dinner, Manuel has been calling Peter's name while walking into each room of the house, even though Olivia continues to remind him that Peter lives in a different state. Every day, Manuel becomes more anxious and agitated as he continues to look for Peter. One evening, he tries to leave the house without his coat and shoes.</p></div>	
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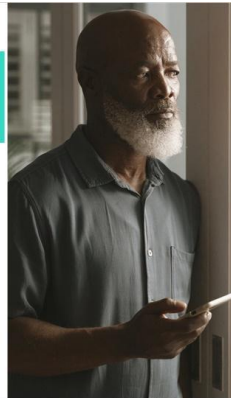
When Additional Help is Needed



When Additional Help is Needed

When Additional Help Is Needed

- Behaviors can be stressful no matter how well you use these approaches.
- Dementia-related behaviors may be more severe and happen more often as the disease progresses.
- You might want to find outside help or a different caregiving setting if:
 - Behaviors become too much for your emotional or physical health.
 - You are worried that anyone in the house is not safe.



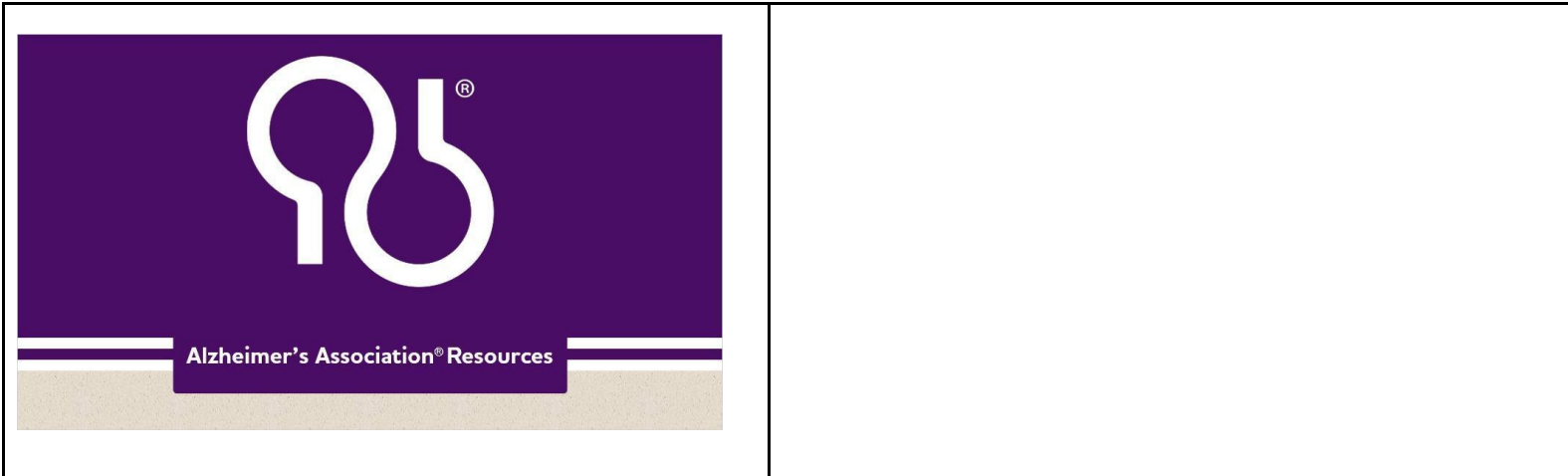
A Note About Gun Safety and 911







- If there are firearms in the home, dementia-related behaviors such as suspicion, delusions or aggression can quickly become dangerous.
- To prevent accidents from happening, caregivers should seriously think about removing guns and other weapons from the home, or locking them in a cabinet.
- If the safety of the person living with Alzheimer's, a caregiver or another individual is at risk, call 911 and make sure police or first responders know before they arrive that the person has dementia.

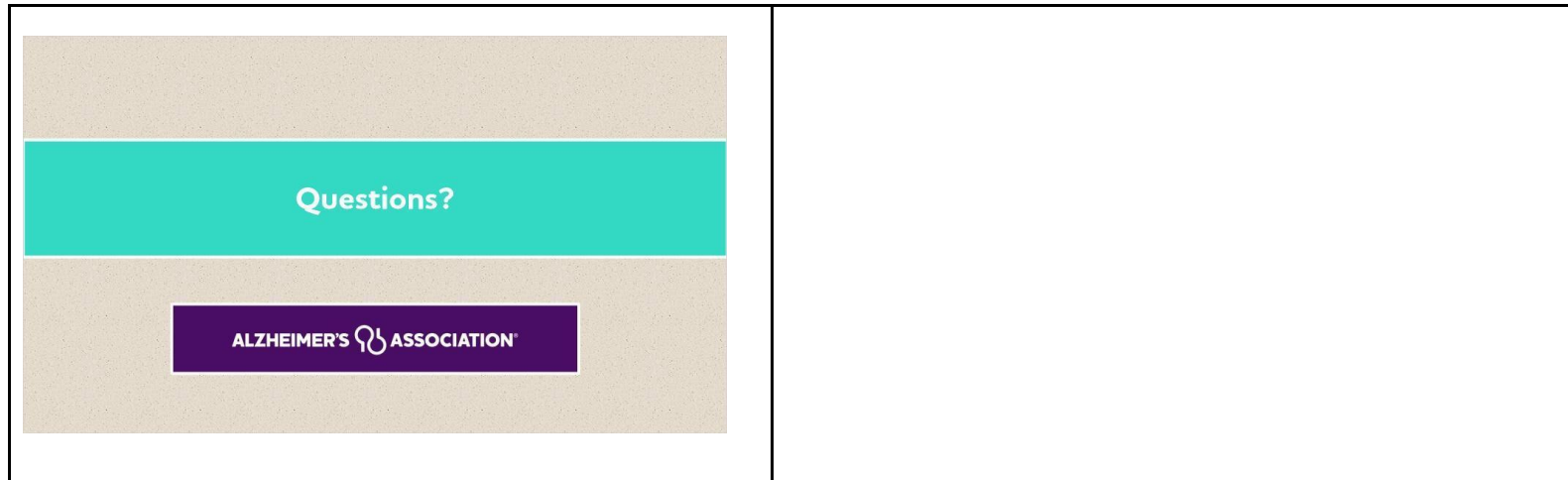


Alzheimer's Association Resources



Alzheimer's Association Resources and Support		
 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900)	 Local Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find your chapter (alz.org/findus)• Support groups• Alzheimer's Association & AARP Community Resource Finder (alz.org/crf)	
 Online (alz.org) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• alz.org/care• alz.org/safety• alz.org/driving	ALZConnected® (alz.org/alzconnected) ALZNavigator™ (alz.org/alznavigator)	 Education Programs (alz.org/education) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-person, online and virtual

Questions/Closing



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