

IDEA! Strategy

IDEA! is a simple three-step strategy to help you figure out *why* a challenging behavior is happening and how to deal with it.



Identify the problem/challenging behavior

- What is the behavior that is challenging for you to deal with? Be specific. Can you see it?

Educate Yourself

Understand the cause of the behavior

- **Health:** Is the person taking a new medication, getting sick, or in pain?
- **Environment:** Is it too noisy? Is it too hot? Is the place unfamiliar?
- **Task:** Is the task too hard? Are there too many steps? Is it something new?
- **Communication:** Is it hard for the person to speak or understand?

Understand the meaning of the behavior to the person

- Does the person feel like he/she is being treated like a child?
- Are there things that remind the person of something unhappy?
- Does the person feel a sense of insecurity, discomfort, or boredom?

Adapt

Try different things. Pay attention to the person's feelings.

Practice being calm, gentle, and reassuring.

- Address the cause or triggers of the behavior by:
 - Keeping tasks and activities simple
 - Keeping the home as quiet and calm as possible
 - Speaking slowly and gently/trying not to say too much at one time
 - Not arguing/trying to comfort the person
 - Finding meaningful, simple activities so the person isn't bored
- Distract or redirect by:
 - Offering the person something he/she likes to eat
 - Watching a TV show or listen to music
 - Asking the person for his/her help with a simple activity
 - Leading the person to a different room