Suspiciousness and Paranoia

**Identify the Problem**

**PROBLEM:** Suspiciousness and Paranoia (accusing, blaming)

**GOAL/EXPECTED OUTCOME:** To improve caregiver capacity to cope with and manage behaviors of suspiciousness and paranoia

**Educate Yourself**

**ASSESS FURTHER:**

Understand the possible triggers of the problem:
- Is the person’s environment unfamiliar?
- Are the people around the person unfamiliar to him/her?
- Was there a change in the person’s routine?
- Has the person misplaced an item he/she is looking for?
- Is there too much going on around the person?
- Is the person experiencing hallucinations or delusions due to the disease?

Understand the possible meaning of the problem to the person with Alzheimer’s:
- Is the person angry?
- Does the person feel taken advantage of?
- Is the person scared?

Understand the possible meaning of the problem to the caregiver:
- Does the caregiver feel wrongfully blamed? [It is not uncommon for people with the disease to accuse those who are closest to them of stealing]
- Is the caregiver frustrated?

**Adapt Problem solve with interventions and actions**

**TEACH PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGIES TO CAREGIVER:**
- The source of suspicion might be real! Check it out first
- Don’t take it personally; this is part of the disease
- Try to keep the person’s routine the same every day
- Use a calm and gentle tone of voice; don’t argue with the person
- Make sure the lighting is bright
- Try to limit noises and distractions around the person
- Offer to help the person look for lost things
- Learn where the person’s common “hiding places” are and let other caregivers know
- If the person is often looking for a specific item, have extras available (i.e., multiple wallets, a canceled check, etc.)

**CLINICAL SUPPORT:**
- Refer to PCP to assess for adverse effects of medications or possible medical or psychiatric conditions, if hallucinations or delusions are present
- If non-pharmacological approaches prove unsuccessful, refer to PCP for medications, targeted to specific behaviors, as clinically indicated
**CAREGIVER SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES:**
- Listen empathically to caregiver and evaluate for level of distress
- Refer to Alzheimer’s Greater Los Angeles for support groups, disease education, and care consultation
  - ALZ Direct Connect referral
  - Provide 24/7 Helpline #: 844.HELP.ALZ | 844.4357.259
  - Website: www.alzgla.org
- Send literature:
  - Topic Sheet – “Suspiciousness and Paranoia”

**FOLLOW UP:**
- Schedule a phone call with caregiver to discuss outcomes and provide additional support

**NOTES:**
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