



3D's Delirium, Dementia and Depression



When you notice a change in a patient/client or family member that you know well but who is just not acting right...

- The person may have worsening confusion, agitation, hallucinations, tearfulness, speech, or memory changes.
- This can be due to a new illness or worsening of an underlying health condition.
- It is important to observe and report this information immediately to family members, other caregivers, and your supervisor when you see these changes.
- Some common causes of these changes may be one or more of the 3D's - Delirium, Dementia, Depression.

Changes in memory or mood are common, especially in older adults and those who are sick.

- Any of the 3 D's (delirium, dementia, and depression) can affect a person's ability to provide self-care and can worsen over time
- The person may need more assistance with basic activities of daily living and be at risk for illness, falls, and hospitalizations

	<u>D</u> elirium	<u>D</u> ementia	<u>D</u> epression
What changes?	Thinking Sleep Behaviors	Thinking Memory Ability to care for self	Mood Energy Appetite
When does it happen?	Sudden onset Days to a week	Many years	Weeks to months
What is observed?	Restlessness, hallucinations (seeing or hearing things not there), emotional outbursts, agitation, confusion, or sleepiness/lethargy	Poor short-term memory, agitation, wandering, aggression, loss of interest in things, repeating questions	Poor concentration, feeling down or worthless, not wanting to do things, poor appetite, changes in sleep, tearfulness
Why is this important?	Could be an emergency; an early sign of a more serious illness (infection or medication side effects)	Needs for more assistance and reminders, safety risk if wandering alone outside of house	Worsening sadness, crying, thoughts of suicide, and feeling that life is not worth living

What are other things that can affect an older person's thinking and daily functioning?

- Grief/loss, anxiety, poor sleep
- Loss of physical abilities
- Chronic medical conditions
- Side effects of medications
- Vision and hearing loss
- Loneliness, isolation, and inactivity
- Drug and alcohol use
- Any illness or infection



Key Points

- Follow the individual care plan for patient/client
- Contact your manager or supervisor if you are unsure
- Report any changes you observe with your patient/client
- Ask caregivers for more information if you have concerns



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