

Responding to distressed behaviours

Full day course

Training audience:

- The health and social care workforce
- Staff in roles working directly with people with dementia in a care and support or similar setting. For example, staff at a community day centre for older people run by a charity.

Course level: This course aligns with Tier 2 of the [Dementia Training Standards Framework \(updated 2026\)](#)

Course prerequisites: All learners to read **dementia training pre-course reading**. An accessible two-page information sheet about dementia will be provided by Alzheimer's Society before the course. It is the client's responsibility to ensure this pre-course reading is provided to all learners.

Length of course: Full day of 7 hours with breaks

Course delivery: Face to face or virtual delivery (for example by Zoom)

Course size: A minimum of 8 and a maximum of 15 people per course

Course learning outcomes

- Recognise that the behaviour of a person living with dementia is a form of communication and can help practitioners identify and respond to unmet needs
- Understand how a person's feelings and perception can affect their behaviour
- Understand triggers and common causes of distressed behaviour by people living with dementia
- Be able to recognise distressed behaviour and provide a range of responses to comfort or reassure the person living with dementia
- Understand how you can support people with dementia showing distressed behaviours in your role.

This course features the voices and experiences of people with dementia as well as families, friends and carers using Alzheimer's Society resources and case studies.

Alzheimer's Society training courses are created with the input of people with dementia and carers.

This course includes activities which encourage learners to reflect on their engagement with people with dementia and apply the information given to their roles.

Course structure

Welcome and introduction ▪ Introduction ▪ Learning agreement and learning outcomes ▪ Activity
Dementia and the brain ▪ How does the brain work? ▪ Symptoms and behaviours
Behaviour and dementia ▪ What is behaviour? ▪ Behaviours that challenge and distress
How dementia affects a person's behaviour ▪ Activity ▪ Information covering 13 common types of distressed behaviour in people with dementia
Understanding needs ▪ Kitwood's Flower ▪ Person-centred care, cultural competency ▪ Younger people and dementia ▪ Activities
Break
Behaviour and communication ▪ Activities
Unmet needs and behaviour ▪ Behaviour as communication ▪ Needs and behaviours including unmet needs and pain and discomfort ▪ Activities
Responding to questions and should you lie to someone with dementia?
Approaches for distressed behaviours ▪ The VERA framework ▪ Validation Therapy ▪ Activities
Break
The role of routines, the environment and social interaction in distressed behaviour
Supporting people with specific behaviours
Break
Activities
Managing aggressive behaviour and staying safe
Medication and distressed behavior
Putting learning into practice ▪ Activity using case studies to encourage learners to apply learning to their roles
Signposting including for the family and friends of people with dementia and signposting
Questions and feedback

Please contact the team on dementiatraining@alzheimers.org.uk or 02074 233538 to book a course.