



# Florida REACH Project

Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health

## Prescription for Verbal Aggression

**Specific Behavior:**

**Overall Goal of this Prescription:**

**Please remember that dealing with challenging behaviors can be stressful. The brief relaxation strategies will help you deal with stress when dealing with this challenge. In particular, we recommend using the signal breath technique immediately before you use the strategies suggested in this behavioral prescription.**

**Strategies for preventing a challenging behavior from occurring (try picking one thing and sticking with it for a few weeks):**

**Prevent frustration that may lead to anger and upset by trying to identify the source or trigger. Be sure to consider needs such as toileting, eating, pain management, and illness.**

1. Ensure that the person gets adequate rest. Schedule challenging activities at a time of day when he/she is most rested.
2. Provide opportunities to get exercise (e.g., a daily walk).
3. Avoid situations with loud noise or too many people.
4. Try not to criticize your loved one.
5. Try to recognize when the person is becoming upset and allow him/her to express feelings.
6. Talk to the medical team. It is important to consider possible medical reasons for his/her behavior. The team may have some suggestions that may help with agitation.

**Other Strategies:**



**Strategies for guiding how you respond during or after a behavior occurs:**

- 1. Always keep your voice soft and low, and use calming words.**
- 2. Do not argue.** Avoid criticism and use reassurance. Pay attention to your body language as the person may pick up on your anger and frustration.
- 3. If possible, take the person away from an upsetting situation (e.g., go to a quiet room, go for a walk).**
- 4. Try distracting with an activity. For example:**
  - Ask him/her to help you with a task.
  - Suggest taking a walk outside.
  - Take your loved one for a ride.
- 5. Engage yourself in an activity away from the situation.** The best thing you may be able to do for yourself, is just to disengage from the situation.
  - Work on yard-work.
  - Practice the signal breath.
  - Listen to relaxing music.
  - Call a friend.

**General Information:**

You are a dedicated caregiver and you are doing a great job. We understand that this can be very upsetting to you and are committed to helping you with this challenge. We believe these strategies will help and look forward to working with you in the coming weeks.

Please remember that you can reach out to the social workers on your medical team if you have any questions or concerns.

