

# CAT

## On the Prowl



# CHANGING ANTIPSYCHOTIC THINKING

Imagine a resident, Betsy, is up and about every day at 4 p.m. Could she be worried and pacing? Watching for her kids to get off the bus, as she did 50 years ago?

Care partners who know Betsy's routine will walk along side and calmly redirect her. Maybe Betsy feels lost or confused. Maybe she needs exercise, companionship or a visit to the bathroom. A good care partner will help guide Betsy's path, ask her to help with an activity and give her a sense of purpose. We all want meaningful lives, a sense of identity and a feeling of connectedness.

### **Seniors may need medical assessments to rule out physical causes for "wandering."**

Stimulants like caffeine, medication and disorders can create an urge to use the restroom frequently or pace. Wanderers may be in pain or feel too hot, cold, hungry or thirsty. Sometimes they only need a warm blanket, a snack or a hand to hold.

**Never use antipsychotic medication for wandering. This can actually *cause* severe motor restlessness, increase confusion, and put the person at risk for heart attack, stroke or death.**

### **Action steps:**

1. Please post this flyer for all staff to read!
2. Know each person—habits, routines, profession, family, skills and pet peeves. Try to discover their reasons for wandering.
3. Recruit all departments and all shifts to watch when residents start pacing and try to find out what they seem to want. Track attempts to help each person. When something works, inform everyone. Add the intervention in the person's care plan.
4. Plan meaningful activities when the person is likely to wander.
5. Look for the next tip – CAT takes a bath!

### **Don't miss these training opportunities:**

- Call the Alzheimer's Association Helpline, 1-800-272-3900, for ideas on what people may be trying to tell you through their actions.
- Print and post the two page NCCNHR *Individualized Assessment with Behavior Symptoms* consumer fact sheet. Find this in the Advancing Excellence website [www.nhqualitycampaign.org](http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org), CMS Partnership to Improve Dementia Care (blue box), consumer information.
- Watch the Module 4 video clips in the Hand in Hand Toolkit to understand why people may act the way they do and how to respond positively. Use the training notes as well.

### **For more information, contact a MO LANE Planning Committee Member:**

Department of Health & Senior Services • Primaris • State LTC Ombudsman • MC5 • Missouri League for Nursing • Missouri Center for Patient Safety • QIPMO • Leading Age Missouri • Missouri Association of Nursing Home Administrators • Missouri Health Care Association • Missouri Board of Nursing Home Administrators • AMDA • National Association of Health Care Assistants • Missouri Veteran's Commission  
• Missouri Pain Initiative • Heartland Kidney Network • Missouri Hospice and Palliative Care Association