Guidelines to Behavior Problem Solving

- **When** does the problem occur?
- **Where** does it occur?
- **What** triggers the problem?
- **Who** is involved?
- **What** follows the behavior?
- **What emotion** (fear, anger, frustration) is involved?
Managing Behavior

Communication

- *Be calm, gentle, reassuring*
- *Use humor*
- *Maintain good eye contact*
- *Keep your speech volume steady, low*
- *If frustrated, try later*
- *Never give up*
Listening Skills

- **Listen actively**
  - don’t try to do two or more things at once

- **Respond to the emotional tone of what’s said**

- **Remember that the speaking voice is affected in HD**

- **Be generous with praise and encouragement**
Environment

- Simplify communication
  - Direct answers
  - Brief explanations
  - Eliminate distractions when communicating
    - radio, t.v., etc.

- Establish consistent routines
Communication Difficulties in HD

People with HD may have difficulties with:

- **How** words are said; rhythm of speech
- **Starting** a conversation
- **Organizing** thoughts
- **Understanding** what is said
Clues for Better Communication

- Allow enough time
- Offer cues and prompts
- Give choices
- Break tasks down into smaller steps
- Use yes/no format
- Speech therapy
- Use communication aids
Memory Impairment in HD

*People with HD may experience:*

- *Difficulty learning new information*
- *Difficulty recalling learned information*
The Cognitive Disorder: Executive Function

- Organizing
- Prioritizing
- Controlling impulses
- Monitoring self-awareness
- Beginning and ending activities
- Creative thinking
- Problem-solving
Strategies for Managing Apathy

- Understand that this is part of HD, not “laziness”
- Use calendars to show what is coming up
- Maintain consistent routines
  - Get up at similar time each day
  - Establish realistic responsibilities/roles they can contribute to
Managing Behavior

Strategies for Helping Disorganization

- Use lists
- Use prompts for each step
- Rely on consistent routines
Coping with Impulsivity

- Remember impulsivity is a part of HD
- Don’t always assume there is no trigger/reason:
  - Be thoughtful
- Maintain consistent routines
- Stay calm
- If impulsivity causes danger, consider mood stabilizing medication
Managing Behavior

Managing Frustration, Irritability and Angry Outbursts

- Set realistic expectations and responsibilities
- Avoid confrontations and ultimatums
- Use redirection techniques
- Consider medications if necessary
Denial and Unawareness

- Accept that this is part of HD
- Be creative
- Consider counseling or support group
Managing Repetition and Perseveration

- Use distraction techniques
- Try to set limits
- Medication may help
Managing Behavior

Managing Depression

- Seek medical assistance early
  - Medications can be effective treatment

- Try counseling and therapy

- Recognize the possibility of thoughts of suicide:
  - Take precautions to remove weapons, access to potentially toxic medications (including over-the-counter medications)
  - If the person has a plan or intent to harm him/herself, use emergency services:
    - suicide help line, emergency room, 911
Managing Anxiety

- Use routines
- Simplify environment
- Avoid bringing up future stressful events too early
- Consider medications:
  - benzodiazepines, mood stabilizers
Managing Psychosis

- Consult your physician
- Antipsychotic medications will help
Sleep Disturbances

- Good sleep hygiene:
  - Regular schedule
  - Avoid long naps
  - No heavy meals before bedtime
  - Exercise regularly early in the day
  - Avoid caffeine
  - Warm shower before bedtime
  - Consider medications