

Behavioral Assessments for Dementia-Related, Challenging Behaviors

Challenging behaviors are common with a dementia diagnosis. They are generally well managed by caregivers or even remit over time. However, some behaviors can become chronic or dangerous. In all situations, there are often multiple causes (e.g. environmental, physical, neurological), which tend to be moderated by the individual's emotions and beliefs. Attempting to understand and manage these behaviors can be overwhelming for caregivers.

The goal of this assessment is to attempt to identify the reason(s) behind the challenging behavior(s) and to develop strategies for eliminating (or at least reducing) these behaviors non-pharmacologically, where possible.

The assessment process includes the following:

- Interviews with referral person, the patient, caregiver(s) and family member(s)
- Review of available, relevant medical records
- Direct observation of problematic behavior (where possible)
- Hypothesis development for why this behavior exists (what need it is serving)
- Recommendations for reducing / eliminating the behavior
- Follow up meeting (at a period of time TBD) to assess effectiveness of recommendations / modify if necessary

All of the above would be summarized into a confidential, psychological report and reviewed with appropriate individuals (e.g. caregivers, family members).

Depending on the complexity of the client's diagnosis and the behavior, as well as availability of individuals for interviews and medical records, it is expected the completion of the analysis, the report and presentation of findings could take from two to six weeks.

As a Medicare provider, I bill Medicare the standard/accepted rate for assessments (estimated between 6 to 10 hours of service) and there should be little or no out of pocket expense (depending on whether or not you carry Medicare supplemental insurance). If you prefer to pay out-of-pocket, please contact me to discuss fees.

I am happy to answer any questions. Please feel free to call me -- I offer a free, initial phone consultation to discuss your situation and to determine whether or not such an assessment may be appropriate.