

Putting the Serial Trial Intervention (STI) into Practice

Many people with dementia cannot adequately verbalize their needs, so they express unmet needs through their behaviors. Most often their needs can be met by basic care such as toileting, positioning, adjusting a hearing aide, or applying a lap robe. When behaviors are not resolved with basic care, ongoing assessments and are necessary to determine what is causing their behavior. The steps needed when basic care does not resolve behaviors are discussed in detail in the following section(s).

The STI serves as a systematic guideline, but is flexible enough to allow for nursing discretion. However, in most cases it is highly recommended to move through the following steps in order presented. Documentation of the STI process can be monitored using the form provided.

BEHAVIOR CHANGE IDENTIFICATION

For the entire process to begin there needs to be something that triggers it. Since people with middle to late stage dementia often cannot verbalize their needs, the trigger is usually a change in behavior.

<p>Step 1 Physical:</p>	<p>Begin with a physical assessment to look for physical causes of discomfort. If a problem is identified, appropriate treatment(s) are initiated that target the identified problem. If the behavior continues, or if there was a negative physical assessment, proceed to Step 2</p>
<p>Step 2 Affective:</p>	<p>Conduct an affective needs assessment. If you identify a problem, initiate appropriate treatment(s) that target the identified problem. If the behavior continues, or if there was a negative affective assessment, proceed to Step 3.</p>
<p>Step 3 Trial of Non-Pharmacological Comfort Treatments:</p>	<p>Trial a series of non-pharmacological comfort treatments. If they are ineffective, proceed to Step 4.</p>
<p>Step 4 Trial of Analgesics:</p>	<p>Trial a prescribed PRN analgesic. If it is ineffective, proceed to Step 5.</p>
<p>Step 5 Consultation or Trial of Psychotropics:</p>	<p>If consultation is ineffective, repeat the consult or trial a prescribed PRN psychotropic. If the behavior still continues, repeat the STI.</p>

SERIAL TRIAL INTERVENTION

