

Dementia Care Skills Audit

Beyond the Dementia Behaviors · WHCA + IHCA Fall Conference · Spokane, September 16, 2026

Watch five caregivers give real care, one column each. Mark the column when you see the skill happen and leave it blank when you do not. The count out of five is the answer: a skill your building has, or a skill one person has.

Clinical Observation what the caregiver notices		1	2	3	4	5	OF 5
S-0101	Reads the signals that say care can begin <i>You see it when: The caregiver pauses after the approach, names what they saw, and starts only then. Hands do not move first.</i>						
S-0103	Recognizes a non-verbal refusal <i>You see it when: The caregiver names the exact movement, "she braced her forearm against mine", and halts the attempt.</i>						
S-0111	Notifies agitation building before it peaks <i>You see it when: The caregiver names the rising pattern, raised shoulders, closed fists, faster breathing, and adapts, pauses or stops.</i>						
S-0112	Finds what set off a defensive reaction <i>You see it when: The input, the sense it came through and the moment are all named. "Cold spray on hit armpit, when putting on deodorant."</i>						

Clinical Reasoning what the caregiver makes of it		1	2	3	4	5	OF 5
S-0409	Names what in the person is driving the refusal <i>You see it when: One specific factor tied to this moment. No breakfast due to pain on left arm.</i>						
S-0410	Names what in their own approach is driving the refusal <i>You see it when: The caregiver says what they would do or say differently next time, in specific terms, without being asked.</i>						
S-0411	Names what in the room is driving the refusal <i>You see it when: At least one environmental factor, read from where the person's perspective. "The shower room was cold".</i>						
S-0412	Names what in the organization makes the refusal predictable <i>You see it when: The factor is written into the record as information. "Bath scheduled 06:40. She prefers in the afternoon."</i>						
S-0501	Tells hesitation from refusal, and picks Start, Change, Wait or Switch <i>You see it when: The caregiver says which of the two they are seeing. Hesitation changes the offer. Refusal ends the attempt and sets a return.</i>						
S-0505	Decides mid-task whether to continue, adapt, pause or stop and report <i>You see it when: Takes the appropriate action when defensive reaction builds up. On a stop, the person is left safe and a specific report reaches the team on the same shift.</i>						

Therapeutic Communication how the caregiver reaches the person		1	2	3	4	5	OF 5
S-0601	Runs the whole approach sequence before care begins <i>You see it when: Every step, in order, unprompted, and the approach is personalized to the person.</i>						
S-0602	Knocks, comes in from the front, and gets to eye level before speaking <i>You see it when: The caregiver lower, crouches or sits down at the person's eye height.</i>						
S-0603	Gives their own name and the name the person answers to, with no task in the sentence <i>You see it when: The first sentence carries both names and a reason for the visit that is not the care task. "I'm here to see you."</i>						
S-0604	Offers something with nothing asked for in return <i>You see it when: The offering is named to the person, and no request follows it in the same turn. "I brought you a cup of coffee."</i>						
S-0605	Makes first contact on the hand, forearm or shoulder, palm open and in view <i>You see it when: The first touch of the encounter lands on a social area, inside the line of sight, and rests there before moving on.</i>						
S-0701	Says each move before making it <i>You see it when: A short sentence before every move, not only at the start of the task. "I'm going to pull back the blanket, gently."</i>						
S-0901	Reassures to let arousal come down <i>You see it when: Eye to eye, unhurried voice, three things said in caregiver's own words: It is all right. I heard you. I will be careful.</i>						

Therapeutic Communication how the caregiver reaches the person		1	2	3	4	5	OF 5
S-0908	Lowers demand when a defensive episode is building <i>You see it when: The number of requests drops as the episode builds, no new task is started during it, allows for quiet time afterwards.</i>						
S-0912	Leaves well after every interaction, especially when the answer is no <i>You see it when: Takes the person's side, apologizes briefly, says what the care was for, and names a clock time to come back.</i>						

Professional Communication how the caregiver tells the team		1	2	3	4	5	OF 5
S-1401	Reports a change from the person's normal with enough detail to act on <i>You see it when: The team acts on the report without having to come back and ask a follow-up question.</i>						
S-1404	Turns what they noticed about the person into a care-plan note <i>You see it when: The note names a pattern, a trigger and proposes a change, and a plan review picks it up.</i>						
S-1405	Hands off a “stop” during care that holds up clinically <i>You see it when: The person is covered and settled first, and the handoff names what was seen, what was done, and what needs following up.</i>						

Clinical Procedures how the care itself is done		1	2	3	4	5	OF 5
S-1004	Reads the person's care history before going in <i>You see it when: A specific preference or habit is said out loud before starting. The order used, the water temperature, the name to use.</i>						
S-1013	Gives the least help that works <i>You see it when: An observer can name the rung: supervising, encouraging, instructing, assisting, doing for. Each is used only after the one below has not worked, and the caregiver steps back down when the person picks the task up again.</i>						
S-0802	Lets the person do the parts they do themselves <i>You see it when: The person's own hands complete at least one step, with the caregiver prompting rather than performing.</i>						
S-1206	Reads the mobility plan before any assist <i>You see it when: The mobility level is known and mobility is supported, and a new inability to take weight stops the assist and goes to the team as a medical change.</i>						
S-1023	Sets the mealtime environment before the person sits down <i>You see it when: At least one element is changed before seating, and the caregiver can name which one.</i>						

Ethics and Scope of Practice what protects the person		1	2	3	4	5	OF 5
S-1302	Checks the act against what the person wants, before acting <i>You see it when: A pause at the door. The intended act and the known preference are stated, then followed, or the reason that overrides them is named.</i>						
S-0503	Hands the task to a colleague when the refusal is about who is asking <i>You see it when: The caregiver asks a colleague, gives a neutral reason, and the switch happens on that shift.</i>						

Self-Care and Professional Development how the caregiver stays able to care		1	2	3	4	5	OF 5
S-1503	Settles their own state before and during care. <i>You see it when: A visible pause at the threshold. Stops, breathes, drops the shoulders, slows the pace, adjusts the tone.</i>						

Skills you saw in five caregivers. That number is what the building has. If any skill was not observed in any of the 5 caregivers, that skill needs training. Repeat in ninety days with the same observer, on the same unit. Date _____ Unit _____ Observed by _____						_____ / 30	
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