



Sundowning support for the people we love:

## *Giving orienting statements as behavioral support*

*Brief rationale (reason): With clients who have been diagnosed with dementia, traumatic brain injury, or Alzheimer's Disease, the afternoon and evening can be especially tough. Caregivers can help by being prepared to give an "orienting statement" before loved ones show "I need information". If we miss the chance to give it before it's needed, people show us with challenging or behavior or agitation that this might have been helpful earlier.*

**The basic technique:** An **orienting statement** tells what it's time for, what is going on, and who or what is available to help. This can be helpful when a caregiver walks in the room after someone naps, wakes in the morning, when there is someone new, or there is something unexpected going on.

### **Steps:**

1. **WHEN?** Determine how frequently it would be helpful to give an orienting statement. Consider how frequently someone is "showing" they need one, with their agitated comments or aggressive behavior. Then plan to give an orienting statement a every few minutes or hours, aiming for doing it a little earlier than you expect to see them become agitated.
2. **WHAT?** Say what it's time for, what you're about to do, what materials are nearby and available if they need them, and that's next. Give a "dignified way out" by reminding them how they can ask to get you back if they need something.
3. **HOW?** "Hi mom, I'm here to give you a new blanket and see if you need anything. It's about 5pm in the afternoon. Your favorite TV station will play if you press "PLAY" on the remote right here, and dinner will be ready in thirty minutes. Say "Connie" or press this button if you need something. I'll be back soon."