

Preventing Accidents Due to Combative Behavior

Nursing homes and assisted living facilities have very high rates of injury and illness compared to other injuries. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nursing and personal care facilities experience an average lost workday injury and illness (LWDII) rate of 4.9 compared with 1.8 for private industry as a whole.

Deal safely with combative behavior

Combative behavior is any physically aggressive act that causes or intends to cause hurt or damage to a person or object. Some types of behavior you may encounter in long-term care include:

- **Resisting care**
- **Verbal aggression**
- **Fighting**
- **Catastrophic reaction and inability to control feelings**

In dealing with disruptive or combative behavior, a caregiver must determine what the individual is trying to communicate through their behavior. If you don't act on the message it could lead to further escalation. If you try and suppress the behavior it may come out in some other way which may ultimately be more problematic. To manage the behavior you need to:

1. **Assess and understand the reasons for the behavior or the purposes it services**
2. **Develop a care plan based on realistic goals**
3. **Use strategies to prevent it**
4. **Intervene safely when it occurs**

Formulate a plan

Work closely with the entire care-giving team to develop a plan for successful management, containment and where possible, the prevention of combative incidents. Make your goals realistic. Begin with the understanding that you'll probably be unable to stop all behavior problems and you cannot halt the progression of conditions such as dementia. Here are some realistic goals:

- **Attend to the safety of the combative resident, other residents, staff, visitors and the environment.**
- **Provide support by having all caregivers stay alert to give aid in combative behavior situations.**
- **Increase awareness of behavior that may give clues to the onset of an aggressive act.**
- **Strive for containment with efforts to decrease the frequency, intensity, duration, and disruptiveness of combative behavior.**

For more information and additional risk management and prevention tools, visit: fwcruminsurance.com