

## ***Behavior Changes***

Some of the possible behavioral changes of older adults, reasons for the behavior and possible solutions or interventions.

<b>Behavioral Change</b>	<b>Possible Reasons</b>	<b>Some Solutions</b>
1. Does not want to bathe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of sense of smell.</li> <li>• Change in body temperature.</li> <li>• Fear of falling in shower.</li> <li>• Cannot get into the tub.</li> <li>• May not care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an occasion to clean up.</li> <li>• Install handgrips or bathtub seat.</li> <li>• Be tactful but honest about the problem and discuss it.</li> </ul>
2. Wears the same clothes over and over.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of sense of smell.</li> <li>• Too much routine without occasions or need to dress differently.</li> <li>• Clothes may be comfortable or associated with eventful memories.</li> <li>• No new clothes that fit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide occasions to wear different outfits.</li> <li>• Compliment on appearance and apparel.</li> <li>• Give new clothes as presents after asking what the person would like.</li> <li>• Show real interest in the person.</li> </ul>
3. Closes all the drapes and blinds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As vision decreases, individual notices fewer things.</li> <li>• The house may look clean to the person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggest a visit to the eye doctor.</li> <li>• Sunglasses or visor cap may help.</li> <li>• Understand the problem.</li> </ul>
4. Cannot sleep at night/wanders/ keeps the lights on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not able to have a deep sleep.</li> <li>• May not feel exhausted at the end of the boring day.</li> <li>• May fear falling in the dark, being alone, or dying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan more daytime activities with the person.</li> <li>• Provide a night-light to guide the way to the bathroom.</li> <li>• Encourage the person or join them in relaxing before retiring.</li> <li>• Increase daytime walking or other exercise.</li> </ul>

5. Talks about getting married.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loneliness.</li> <li>• Need for companionship.</li> <li>• Need for sexual activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real companionship 24 hours a day for those who want it.</li> </ul>
6. Drinks constantly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loneliness.</li> <li>• Grief.</li> <li>• Depressed reaction to changes.</li> <li>• Stressful situation.</li> <li>• May be an alcoholic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk honestly about concern when the person <i>has not</i> been drinking.</li> <li>• Suggest &amp;/or provide social activities.</li> <li>• Listen.</li> <li>• Suggest counseling, help from Alcoholics Anonymous, and/or a minister.</li> <li>• Make a change in scenery or situation.</li> </ul>
7. Repeats same statements and stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not hear well enough to participate in a conversation.</li> <li>• Does not remember or realize the repetition.</li> <li>• The statement or story makes a point and communicates what the person wants to say.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate hearing loss and make special efforts to include the person in conversations.</li> <li>• Listen for the point of the story statement.</li> <li>• May reflect anxiety, good self-esteem, or the importance of former activities.</li> <li>• Be reassuring.</li> <li>• Build self-esteem.</li> <li>• Encourage important activities in the present.</li> <li>• Be understanding.</li> <li>• Do not argue.</li> <li>• Re-direct or distract to another conversation or activity.</li> </ul>

Adapted from As People Grow Older, Jane Oderberg, & Sue Smith, 1995 and other sources.