

## You Are Changing

*What Should I Do to Support You Where You Are?*

*by Teepa Snow, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA*

When we are trying to help someone live in the earlier parts of dementia, it is vital that we are able to respond to distressing moments in a way that meets the person's expectations and abilities. That means we have to be accurate in what GEMS state we think or feel we are noticing. So, what are some of the key differences between living in a Diamond state compared to an Emerald state when it comes to being distressed? Last year I did GEMS state webinars on distress and pleasure. They are part of our growing library of resources to help PAC Supporters make a positive difference in people's lives by using what you learn to change what you see, do, and say! Take a few minutes and see how well you are able to pick up on where the person is with their abilities and what you could do that might be more helpful to them. *Note: The answer key is hidden somewhere in the Journal.*

1. I am refusing to attend activities I have always previously enjoyed and been interested in, indicating that I just am not going to do it anymore and it is none of your business about why, when asked.
  - a. Emerald State
  - b. Diamond State

[Click Here to view a video resource for Question 1.](#)

2. I am asking to go home, even though I am in a place I have lived for at least five years and want to know where my little daughter is and who is taking care of her, while I am talking to my daughter who is forty years old.
  - a. Emerald State
  - b. Diamond State
3. I am emotionally melting down! Which option would serve us better?
  - a. Make sure you have eye contact and tell me that you know I am upset, but it is really OK, while you pat me on the forearm or hand
  - b. Tell me to calm down and take a deep breath, in a loud firm voice
  - c. Move to my right side, match my eye contact level, and offer back some of the value words I gave you with a similar emotional tone of voice and facial expression

[Click Here to view a video resource for Question 3.](#)

4. When is a good time to re-vamp my care plan and environmental supports to provide 24/7 awareness support, communication alteration support, and task performance monitoring for a person living with dementia?
- a. As soon as you notice the first signals of change
  - b. When you are noticing the development of fairly consistent new patterns of behavior and shifts in ability
  - c. When the system is simply not working anymore

[Click Here to view a video resource for Question 4.](#)

5. What is an effective intervention option when you are a third party observing a situation where both the care partner and the person living with dementia are in a high distress state and in a public place?
- a. Position yourself in the care partner's tunnel vision slightly beyond the PLwD and get visual attention
  - b. Place yourself between the two people and ask them to pause for a moment and listen to you
  - c. Call for back-up on your cell phone, as this will typically result in an episode of violence when the person living with dementia is in a Diamond state

[Click Here to view a video resource for Question 5.](#)

6. I am trying hard to keep up with my life, however, I just can't find important things when they are not where they have always been and I do not think I am the one who moved them, creating a sense of distrust for those around me.
- a. Emerald State
  - b. Diamond State
7. Who is likely to be using denial as a coping strategy when someone you care about is living in an emerald state?
- a. The person living with dementia
  - b. The primary care partner
  - c. The person who is not typically around often and only connects for short periods
  - d. Everyone involved

[Click Here to view a video resource for Question 7.](#)

8. If you are a care partner for someone in a Diamond State AND you are feeling distressed AND you are more of an introvert, you will probably be able to problem solve situations well, as long as you have time to yourself to think it through.
- a. True
  - b. False

[Click Here to view a video resource for Question 8.](#)

*If you want to see more on what is not very helpful in these situations, consider watching the full length webinars [Coping with Diamond Distress](#) and [Coping with Emerald Distress](#) for just \$10.00 each.*