

It's not him...It's the disease

Community Presentation March 15 2018

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Objectives

- What does this phrase mean?
- What are possible implications of this thinking
- What should we explore?
- What are better solutions than this philosophy?



It's not him.



It's the disease.

Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD) – Responsive Behaviours

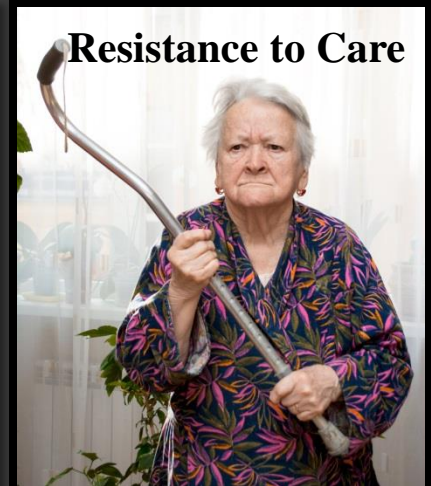
Agitation



Paranoia



Resistance to Care



Repetitive Questioning

What time is lunch?

What time is lunch?

What time is lunch?

Wandering



Calling Out



This is hard.



Everything
happens
for a
reason

God doesn't
give you
more than
you can
handle

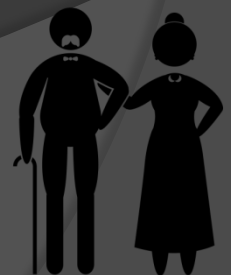
WELL INTENTIONED PHRASES

It's not
him.
It's the
disease.



Intended message:

- Do not take it personally
- They aren't trying to be difficult
- If not for the disease, this wouldn't be happening.



Consequence

- De-humanizing
- Intellectual laziness
- Not a helpful tool

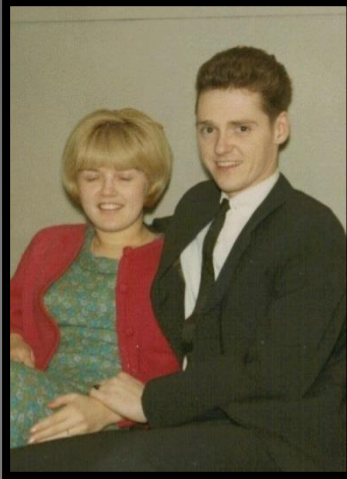


Knowledge is Power



Dehumanizing

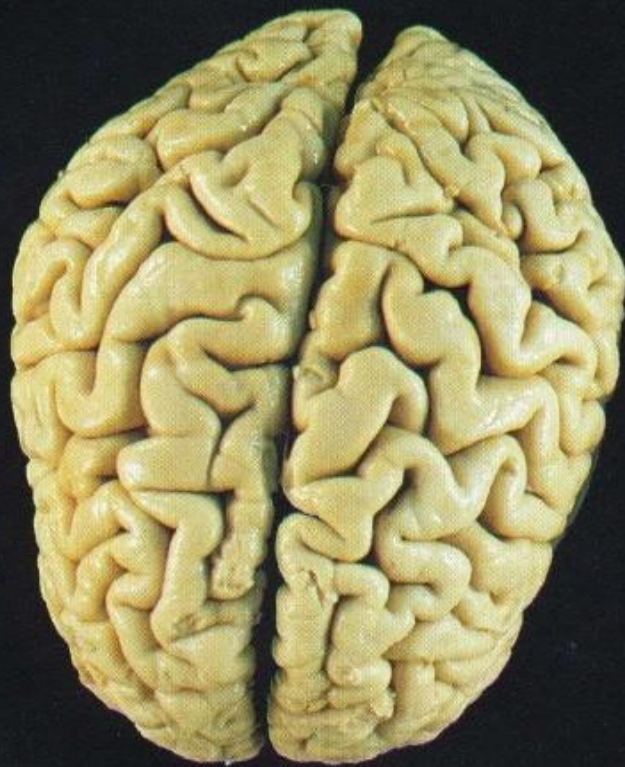
Don Bellamy



Not Memory Problems...



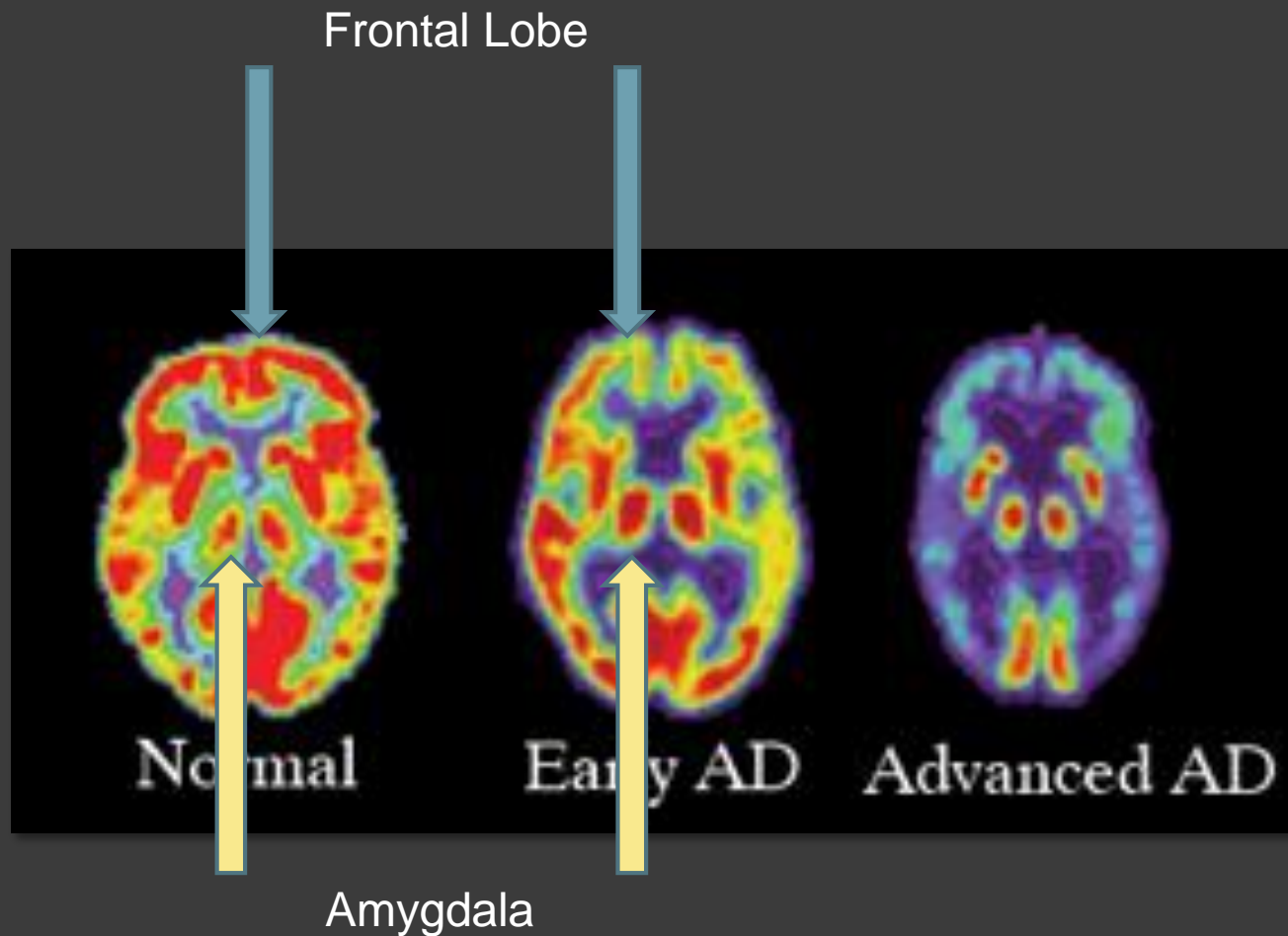
Dehumanizing



Normal Brain



Alzheimers Brain



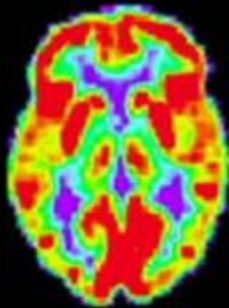
- Emotions and emotional memory are real, even if event memory is gone.



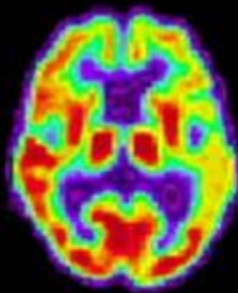
Dehumanizing

Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Alzheimer's Disease Progression vs. Normal Brains

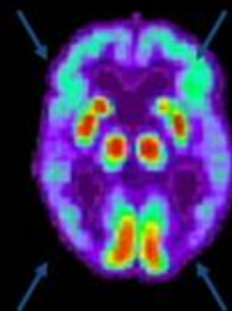
Normal



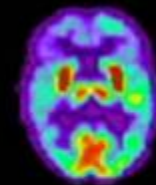
**Early
Alzheimer's**



**Late
Alzheimer's**



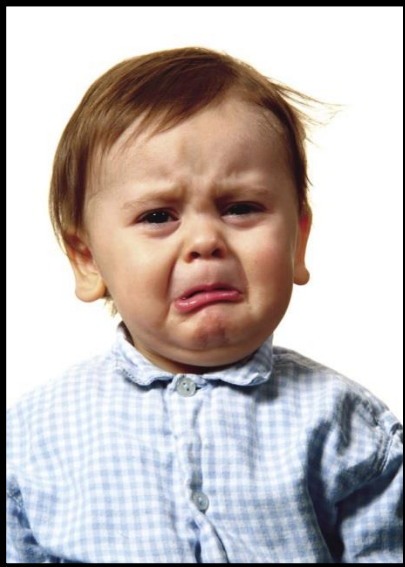
Child



used with permission from *Alzheimers; The
Broken Brain*, 1999 University of Alabama

G. Small, UCLA School of Medicine.

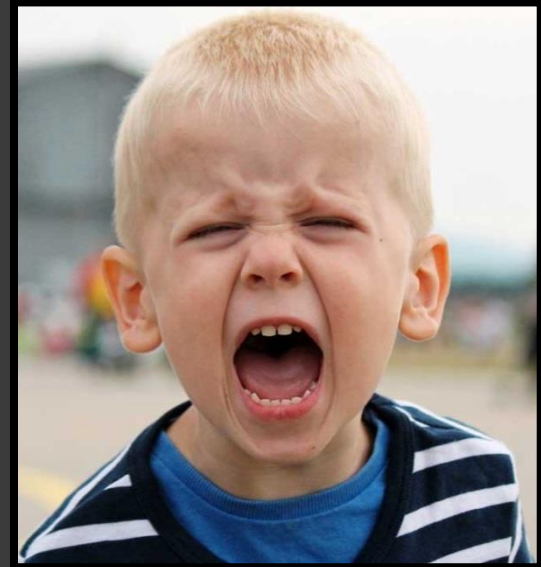




Sad



Scared



Angry



Dehumanizing



Intellectual Laziness

Atypical Presentation of Illness



Sudden Behaviour Changes and Illness

Vague Presentation:

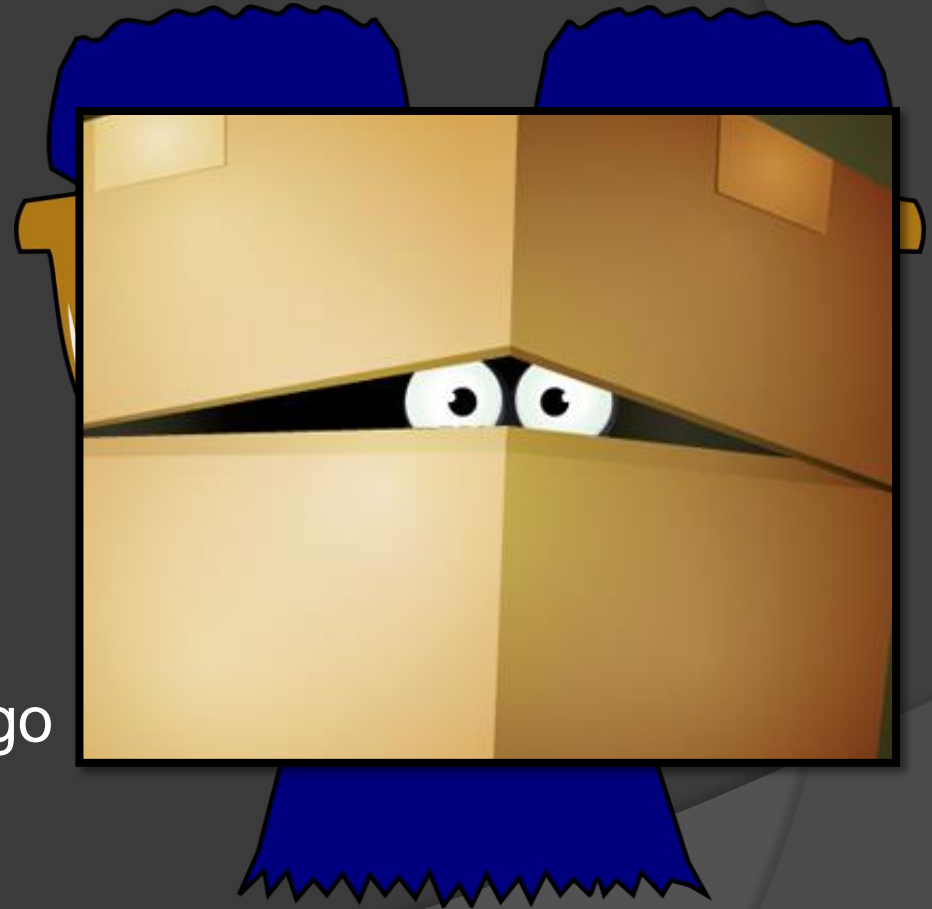
- Change in demeanor
- Functional change

Altered Presentation:

- Unusual Symptoms

Non Presentation

- Medical problems that go undiagnosed



Non Presentation

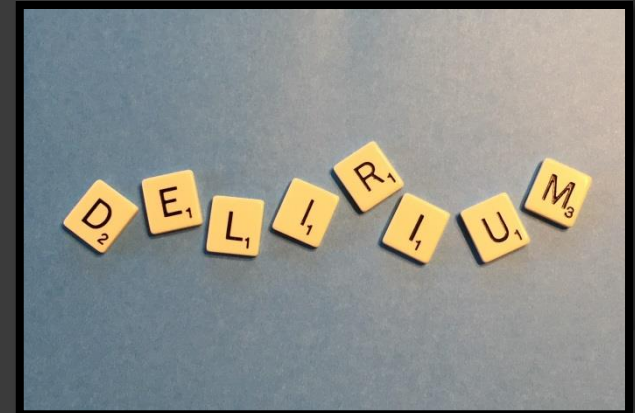
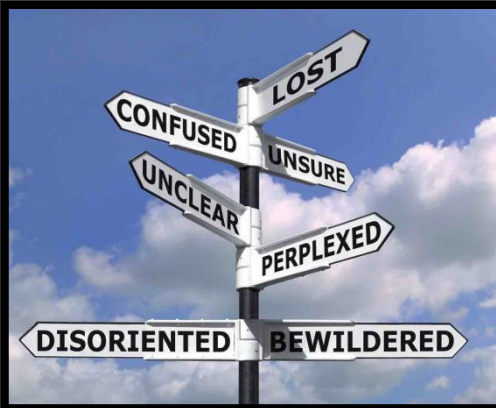
Why?

- Insidious nature
- Tendency to disregard symptoms as normal
- Reluctance to complain
- Communication deficits



Why is this important?

- Change in mental status is one of the most common presenting symptoms of acute illness
- Acute functional decline = Acute illness
- Prevention of delirium



Now what?



First Communications



- What are our first communications?





- Empathic Curiosity
- Look for the emotion behind the words
- Look for cues/clues
- **Consider their history**

**Remember: This IS
“Mary”**



Useful Tools



Useful Tools







**We must
try to
see what
they see.**



What tools can we use?

Preserved for Longer

Long ago memories

Emotional memories (even new ones)

Paraverbal communication: tone, rhythm, body language, facial expressions

Procedural memories – motor memory

Social cues and rituals

Awareness of familiar vs unfamiliar

Ability to use hands to describe

Automatic speech (social chit chat, turn taking)

Music and song

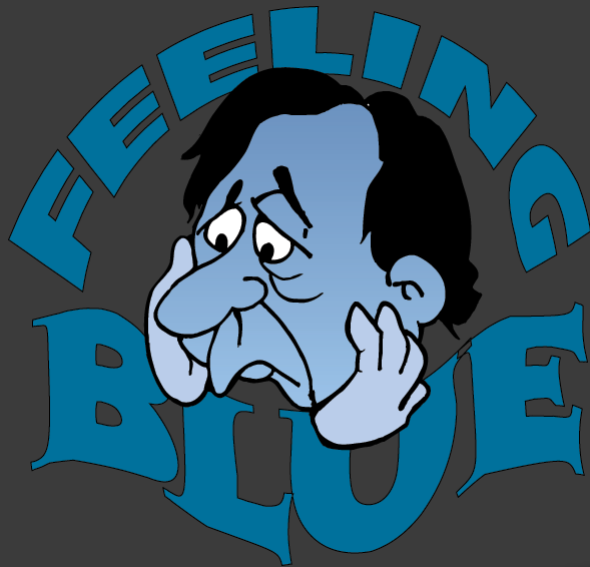
Desire to be respected



Non-Verbals and Dementia

With dementia, people live in the here and now

- May not **remember** the *details*
- May not be able to **understand** the *details*
- They **know** how they *feel* and they **retain** the *emotions* from an interaction





Useful Tools



Approach

Useful Tools

Approach

Always use this sequence to cue:

- VISUAL
- VERBAL
- TOUCH

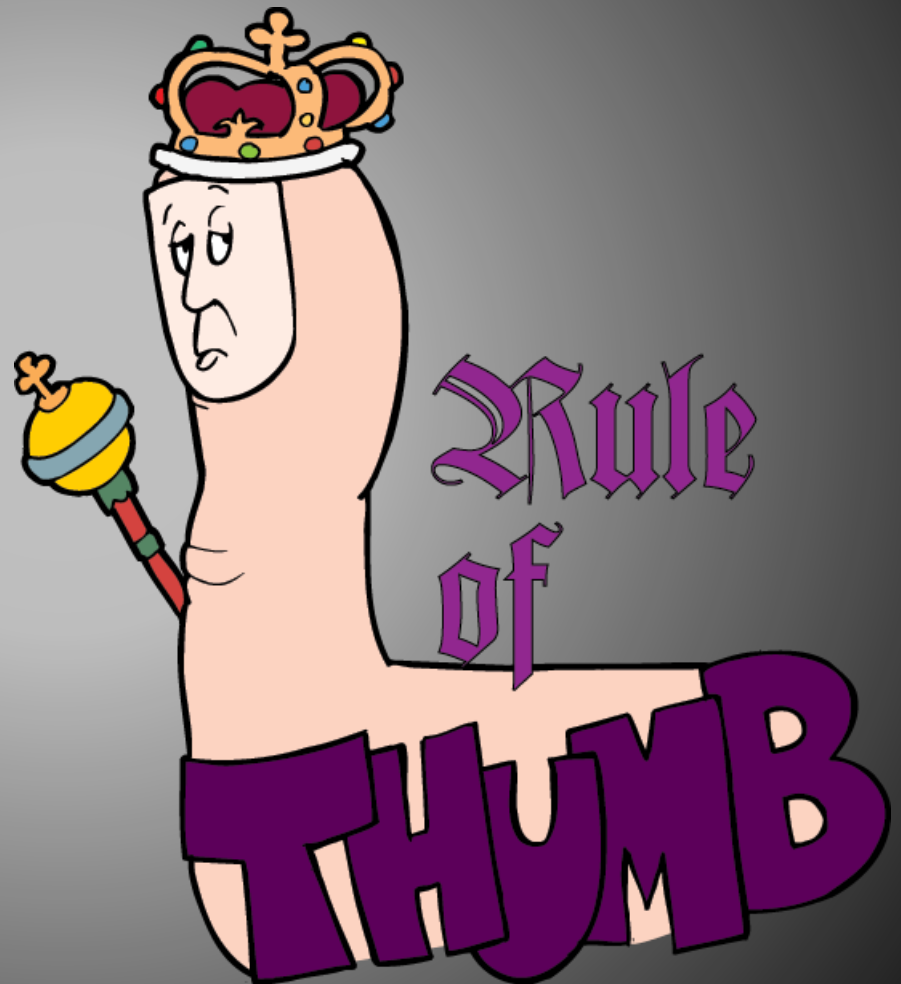


Changes in visual field with dementia change everything

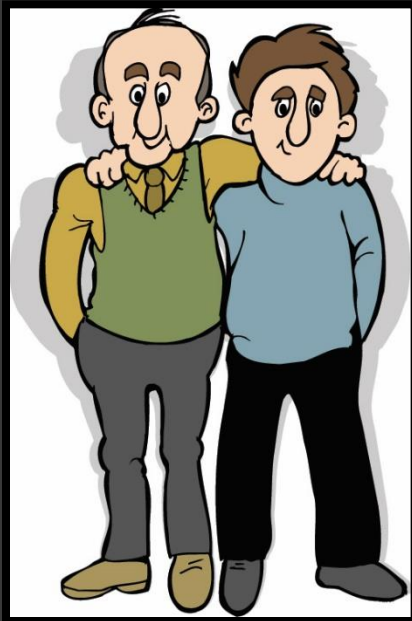


Approach

- Start **every** communication with connection
- Support self esteem and control
- Meet a need
- Substitution NOT Subtraction



Start with Connection



- Hold off on your agenda
- Connect using social cues
- Offer your hand



Support Control and Esteem

- Do not argue.
- Set up for success
- Involve them in decisions
- Be flexible
- Never use “Elderspeak”
- Focus on feelings not details



Useful Tools



Meet a Need



Useful Tools

Substitution NOT Subtraction

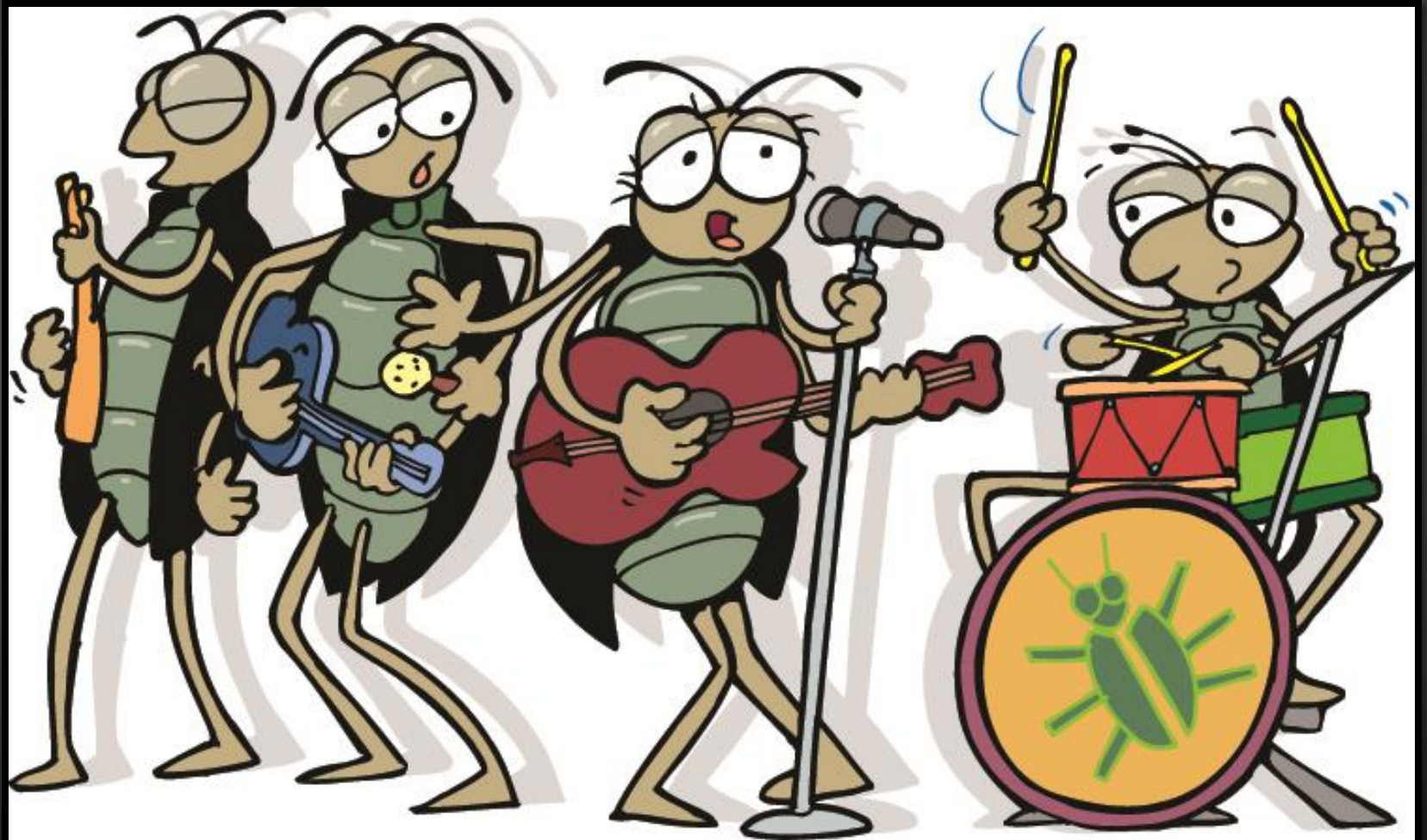


- Purposeful activities
- Consider the individual
 - Work history? Hobbies? Interests?
- Keep a log of ideas that work
- Focus on enjoyment rather than achievement



Useful Tools

Music



Music

- Music and rhythm remain until end of disease
- Can be used for calming or distraction
- Can be used to get people moving



Other Tools and Tips



- If they are upset: meet them in their emotional space
- Sometimes less is more – Quality not quantity
- Your shadow is long
- Use hand holding technique to manage tasks
 - – Teepa Snow
- It IS HIM



Reset



Conclusion

- Behaviour changes may be a sign of a fixable problem – medical, environmental or social unmet need
- The feelings are real. We need to try to see from their perspective

Conclusion



It is him.
He has brain failure.
This is hard.

Recommended Teepa Snow

- Worksafe BC presentation part 1
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1KUM2Db8Bs>
- Worksafe BC part 2
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1KUM2Db8Bs>

