

# Worksheet 13:

## The ABC approach to understanding and measuring behaviour viewed as challenging

The **ABC approach** is a way of characterising events and resultant behaviours. A behaviour in response to an activating event generates a consequence. If the consequence is inappropriately managed, the situation may escalate and in turn become another activating event.

An **ABC chart** is an observational tool that allows us to record information about a particular behaviour. The aim of using an ABC chart is to better understand what the behaviour is communicating.

The three elements of this approach are:

- **Antecedent – What was happening immediately prior to the behaviour? Who was there? Where were they?**
- **Behaviour – What was the behaviour you actually observed? Be clear, specific and descriptive.**
- **Consequence – What happened after the behaviour? Who was involved?**

Like all behaviour monitoring tools and approaches, the ABC chart should be used by all those who come into contact with the person with dementia. Guidance should be given to all as to how to complete the chart, where it is kept and who has access to it.

The ABC chart will be completed for a pre-determined length of time depending on the severity and frequency of the behaviour – over a 24-hour period or over a period of a week, a month or longer.

Once this timeframe is achieved, the ABC charts will be examined by a key team member and/or psychologist or member of the CMHT, in order for patterns, potential triggers and helpful and unhelpful responses to the behaviour to be identified.

This information will then be used to create a Behaviour Support Plan.