

Changing the Culture of
Dementia Care
One Mind at a Time

Positive
Approach

GEMS[®]
Dementia **Aware**
Dementia **Knowledgeable**
Dementia **Skilled**
Dementia **Competent**

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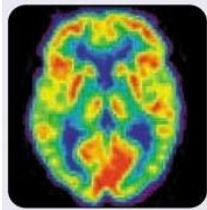


Using a Positive Approach to Dementia Care

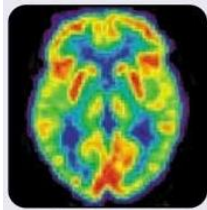
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PET and Aging:



PET Scan of 20-Year-Old Brain



PET Scan of 80-Year-Old Brain

ADEAR, 2003

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As we age, processing speed may slow, but we do not lose function in our brains, unless:

Something Goes Wrong with Our Brains

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So, What is Dementia?

- It is not part of normal aging! It is a disease!
- It is more than just forgetfulness, which is part of normal aging
- It makes independent life impossible, eventually
- It changes everything over time
- It is not something the person can control
- It is not always the same for every person
- It is not a mental illness
- It is real
- It is hard at times
- It is both a chemical and structural change in the brain

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Brain Failure

The person's brain is dying

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Four Truths About Dementia:

1. At least 2 parts of the brain are dying:
one related to memory and another part
2. It is chronic – can't be fixed
3. It is progressive – it gets worse
4. It is terminal – it will kill, eventually

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How You Look At Dementia Matters!

- It is not all about loss
- It is not 'untreatable'
- It is not unpredictable
- Behaviors don't come out of nowhere
- Dementia doesn't just affect the person with the disease – it impacts all of us

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Beliefs:

People living with dementia are doing the best they can

We must learn to dance with our partner

What we choose to do matters

We are a key to making life worth living

We must be willing to change ourselves

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How Can We Become Better Care Partners?

- Let go of the past to be in the moment
- Go with their flow
- Be willing to try something new
- Be willing to learn something different
- Be willing to see it through another's eyes
- Be willing to fail and try again
- Be a detective, not a judge
- Match your help to their remaining abilities
- Look, listen, offer, think

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Some Basic Skills:

1. Positive Physical Approach™
2. Hand-under-Hand® for connection and assistance
3. Supportive Communication
4. Consistent and skill-sensitive cues
 - Visual, verbal, physical

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Getting The Person to Do Something:

Form a relationship first, then work on task attempt!

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1. Positive Physical Approach™:



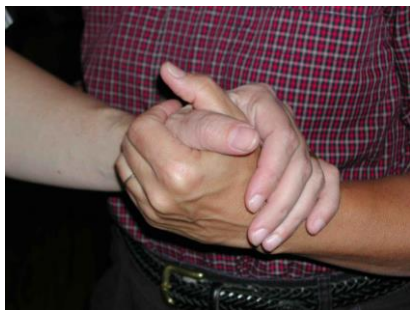
- Pause at edge of public space (6 feet)
- Gesture and greet by name
- Offer your hand and make eye contact
- Approach slowly within visual range
- Shake hands and then maintain Hand-under-Hand®
- Move to the side
- Get to eye level and respect intimate space
- Wait for acknowledgement

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2. Hand-under-Hand®:

Protects aging, thin, fragile, forearm skin



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3. Supportive Communication

- Repeat a few of their words with a question at the end
- Avoid confrontational questions
- Use just a few words
- Go slow
- Use examples
- Fill in the blanks
- Listen, then offer empathy:
“Sounds like...” or “Seems like...” or “Looks like...”

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4. Ways of Cueing and Helping:



- Sight or Visual cues



- Verbal or Auditory cues



- Touch or Tactile cues

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To Connect:

- Use the Positive Physical Approach™ to get started
- Make a Visual Connection:
 - Look interested and friendly
- Make a Verbal Connection:
 - Sound enthusiastic, keep responses short
- Make a Physical Connection:
 - Hold Hand-under-Hand®, or use flat open hand on forearm or knee

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Then, Connect Emotionally:

- Make a connection
- Offer your name: “I’m (name) and you are...?”
- Offer a shared background: “I’m from (place) and you’re from...?”
- Offer a positive personal comment: “You look great in that!” or “I love that color on you.”

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Then, Get it Going!

- Give Simple and short information
- Offer concrete choices
- Ask for help
- Ask the person just to try
- Break the task down to single steps at a time

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Be a Detective, Not a Judge!

Try to figure out what is being communicated:

- Words
- Thoughts
- Actions
- Needs
- Beliefs

Don't assume or presume

Don't discount the message because of how it is delivered

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Top Five Human Needs and Emotional Indicators of Distress



Five Expressions of Emotional Distress:

- Angry**
irritated – angry – furious
- Sad**
dissatisfied – sad – hopeless
- Lonely**
solitary – lonely – abandoned/trapped
- Scared**
anxious – scared – terrified
- Lacking Purpose**
disengaged – bored – useless

Five Human Needs:

- Intake**
Hydration, nourishment, meds
- Energy Flow**
tired or revved up
directed inward or outward
- Output**
Urine, feces, sweat, saliva, tears
- Comfort**
4 Fs and 4 Ss
- PAIN Free!!!**
Physical, emotional, spiritual

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For All Communication:

If what you are trying is not working:

- Stop!
- Back off
- Think it through, then:
- Re-approach
- Try something slightly different

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Do:

- Use empathy and go with the flow
- Use supportive communication techniques
- Use objects and the environment
- Give examples
- Use gestures and pointing
- Acknowledge and accept emotions
- Use empathy and validation
- Use familiar phrases or known interests
- Respect values and beliefs and avoid the negative
- Offer info if asked, monitoring the emotional state

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Don't:

- Try to control the flow
- Use reality orientation and big lies
- Correct errors
- Try to stop the flow
- Reject topics
- Try to distract until you are well-connected
- Use negative visual cues

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The GEMS®

Sapphires
Diamonds
Emeralds
Ambers
Rubies
Pearls



Until we begin to see the beauty and value
in what the person is at this point in time, we
will never care for them as we should

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Why Use GEMS®?

- Uses familiar concepts to talk about a difficult subject
- Focuses on what is valued rather than on a number or amount of 'decline'
- Like people, gems are precious and unique, with common characteristics
- Allow to us to get beyond the words 'dementia' and 'Alzheimers'
- Opens the door to talking about changes
- Allow us to speak in a 'code' to protect dignity

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Sapphires:



- Us on a good day
- Clear and true to ourselves
- May feel 'blue' over changes
- Can typically choose our behavior
- May have other health issues that affect behaviors
- Recognize life experiences, achievements and values
- Can follow written info and hold onto it

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Diamonds:



- Sharp, hard, rigid, inflexible, can cut
- Many facets, still often clear, can really shine
- Are usually either Joiners or Loners
- Can complete personal care in familiar place
- Usually can follow simple prompted schedules
- Misplace things and can't find them
- Resent takeover or bossiness
- Notice other people's misbehavior and mistakes
- Vary in lack of self-awareness
- Use old routines and habits
- Control important roles and territories, use refusals

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Emeralds:



- Changing color
- Not as clear or sharp, more vague
- On the go, need to 'do'
- Flaws may be hidden
- Time traveling is common
- Are usually Doers or Supervisors
- Do what is seen, but miss what is not seen
- Must be in control, but not able to do it correctly
- Do tasks over and over, or not at all

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Ambers:



- Amber Alert- Caution!
- Caught in a moment
- All about sensation and sensory tolerance, easily over or under-stimulated
- May be private and quiet or public and noisy
- No safety awareness
- Ego-centric
- Lots of touching, handling, tasting, mouthing, manipulating
- Explorers, get into things, invade others' space
- Do what they like and avoid what they do not

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Rubies:



- Hidden depths
- Major loss of fine motor finger and mouth skills, but can do gross motor skills like walking, rolling, rocking
- Comprehension and speech halted
- Wake-sleep patterns very disturbed
- Balance, coordination, and movement losses
- Eating and drinking patterns may change
- Tends toward movement unless asleep
- Follows gross demonstration and big gestures
- Limited visual awareness
- Major sensory changes

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Pearls:



- Hidden in a shell: still, quiet, easily lost
- Beautiful and layered
- Spends much time asleep or unaware
- Unable to move, bed or chair bound, frequently fall forward or to side
- May cry out or mumble often, increases vocalizations with distress
- Can be difficult to calm, hard to connect
- Knows familiar from unfamiliar
- Primitive reflexes
- The end of the journey is near, multiple systems are failing
- Connections between the physical and sensory world are less strong but we are often the bridge

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**What you leave behind is not
what is engraved in stone
monuments,
but what is woven into the lives
of others**

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