



# UNDERSTANDING AND DEVELOPING LIFE MEANINGFULNESS FOR ONES WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

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ALZHEIMER'S CARE ARMENIA



## ALZHEIMER'S CARE ARMENIA, INC.

To inspire hope, transform lives and enhance the quality of life for people with Alzheimer's disease and their families in Armenia

# ALZHEIMER'S CARE ARMENIA



Our mission is to raise awareness and visibility of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in Armenia by developing sustainable programs, services and offer solutions for the care and treatment of people with Alzheimer's Disease

Understanding the person with memory loss



Best Communication and Empowerment Techniques



Help the person feel valued and develop life meaningfulness



Discover practical steps you can use every day to make

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## STEP INTO THEIR SHOES AND VALIDATE THEIR REALITY

A person with a dementia may make up stories. These stories serve a purpose. Many times the story is a way of seeking peace or a way of fighting fear. These stories are not lies to the person with dementia.



# #1 CONCEPT

THE PERSON WITH  
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE IS  
ALWAYS RIGHT



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# WHEN PEOPLE FEEL EMPOWERED THEY:

- Sit more erectly
- Keep their eyes open more
- Display more social controls and less aggression
- Cry, pace and pound less
- Have less need for chemical and physical restraints
- Increase verbal and non verbal communication
- Improve their gait
- Improve their mood
- Have less anxiety and withdrawal
- Have an improved sense of self-worth
- May assume familiar social roles in groups
- Have improved awareness of reality and sense of humor.





## EMPOWERING YOUR PATIENT'S REALITY

What age is the person currently living? Where are they in time?

What was significant for the person in their life at that time? We need to live their reality, live their truth.

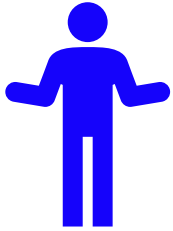
What makes this person feel valued?

What is the person good at?

Remind person of their treasures. Give them back their history, their knowledge and their accomplishments.

Compliment the person on the attributes that they like about themselves.

# HOW TO VALIDATE AND EMPOWER THE PERSON



## **Provide engagement and stimulation**

They need to feel they are succeeding in the world around them

When there is stimulation, people do not withdraw inward

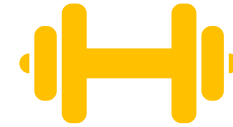
Sara's story (retired teacher)



## **Focus on the positives**

Focus on what the person can do

Provide activities that reinforce cognitive learning, promote positive feelings and maximizing independence



## **Encourage continued life roles and hobbies**

Boost confidence

Ensure a feeling of accomplishment and purpose

Create a tailored daily routine incorporating hobbies/interests

# HOW TO VALIDATE AND EMPOWER THE PERSON

Recognize how behaviors communicate unmet needs

- How you respond to challenging behaviors is important
- Many times a person's made up story is a way of seeking peace or a way of fighting fear

Identify with your own anxieties and defenses with dementia

- Dementia in another person has the power to activate fears of both kinds
  - Fears of dependence and frailty and fear of losing one's mind
- Move beyond your own anxieties and defenses

Talk about the here and now

- Don't dwell on remember this and remember that - people with dementia have a single point of focus
- There is wisdom in being present in the here and now

The person with memory loss is always right

- Understand that the person with Alzheimer's disease is still present, even in the latter stages of the disease

# HOW TO UNDERSTAND AND EMPOWER

The following are a summary of the points we will dive into in more detail:

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Listen

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Realize there is reason behind all behavior

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Don't get caught up in societal beliefs

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See how the person can teach you about life and living

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Provide engagement and stimulation

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Focus on the positives

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Encourage continued life roles and hobbies

8. Recognize how behaviors communicate unmet needs
9. Identify with your own anxieties and defenses with dementia
10. Talk about the here and now
11. The person with memory loss is always right

# HOW TO VALIDATE AND EMPOWER THE PERSON

## Listen

- Adulthood vs. Elderhood
- Listening with empathy
- A trusted listener acknowledged and validates painful feelings

## Realize there is reason behind all behavior

- Drawn to the past or pushed from the present to satisfy their needs
- They either resolve, retreat, relieve, relive or express this need
- Basin of water story

## Don't get caught up in societal beliefs

- Can we gain anything from a person with memory loss?
- Do people with dementia have a purpose or contribute to society?
- It's the journey that matters, not the final destination

## See how the person can teach you about life and living

- An opportunity to slow down, to be more present, to be more caring and to get in touch with the essence of our human nature
- Dementia is not simply a disease, it has purpose and meaning



**THE PERSON WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE CAN BE ENGAGED THROUGH PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES**

# THE CONCEPT OF TIME AND DEMENTIA

- The past may be confused with the present
- Time has absolutely no continuity and is not sequential
- Memory may be there one moment and gone the next
- The person with dementia knows what they know at any given moment



**“YOU DO NOT DISENGAGE BECAUSE YOU ARE OLD... YOU ARE OLD BECAUSE YOU DISENGAGE.”**

WALTER BORTZ, DARE TO BE OLD







# THE WORLD OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE IS NOT A FAULT. IT IS A DISEASE.



# SETA'S STORY

Dr. Jane's visit with Seta





# INNOVATIVE INTERVENTION FOR PEOPLE WITH MEMORY LOSS ROBIN THE ROBOT

Research Project: Investigating the use of an emotional support robot to improve well-being of institutionalized older adults in Armenia. Robin the Robot recognizes the elders emotions by interpreting facial expressions and builds responsive dialogue.

Collaboration between Alzheimer's Care Armenia and Expper Technologies to evaluate the use of a robotic assistant and its impact on memory and emotion at Nork Old Age Home, Yerevan, Armenia. Project is funded by The H. Hovnanian Family Foundation.





## CLOSING THOUGHTS

We all have three basic needs:

To be loved

To express emotion

and

To be productive or useful.

These do not go away as we age or even when memory and other cognitive impairments occur

***You can touch the person within when you understand how to reach them.***