

**Activity Planning for People with Dementia**



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**Objectives**

- Learn why engaging people who have dementia in activities is important.
- Learn how to assess activity interests in people with dementia.
- Learn how to design and implement activities for people with dementia.
- Describe how to adapt activities for each stage of Alzheimer's disease.

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**Activity Basics**



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### An Activity Is...

- Anything that we do from the moment we open our eyes in the morning until we go to bed at night
- Everyday encounters and care tasks (can be just as valuable)
- Individualized in meaning

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### Types of Activities

- **Work:** occupation, household tasks
- **Leisure:** pleasure and enjoyment – movies, concerts, painting
- **Self Care:** ADLs, hygiene, eating
- **Rest:** quiet walk, holding hands, watching birds

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### Activities Should...

- Support remaining abilities
- Not involve new learning
- Enhance quality of life and self-esteem
- Offer choice, without overwhelming
- Be planned and unplanned
- Involve the five senses

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### Benefits of Activity Involvement

Increases	Decreases
Connection with others	Stress
Physical mobility	Agitation
Communication	Wandering
Self-Esteem	Symptoms of Depression
Enjoyment	Boredom
Sense of purpose	Issues with sleep cycle
Cognitive stimulation	Isolation

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### Activity Assessment



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### Know Who You are Supporting!

- Life history
  - Accomplishments, roles, life experiences
  - Preferences, routines, habits, or rituals
  - Coping mechanisms
  - Hopes, dreams, goals
  - Significant others
- Current abilities
- Barriers to participation
- Nonverbal communication

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### Assessment Methods

- Interview the person living with dementia and/or family and staff that know the person well - part of Life History
- Leisure interest survey-pictures or words
- Observation of a participant in an activity

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### Observational Assessment of Josephine

- What are her abilities?
- What are possible barriers to participation?
- What types of activities might she enjoy?

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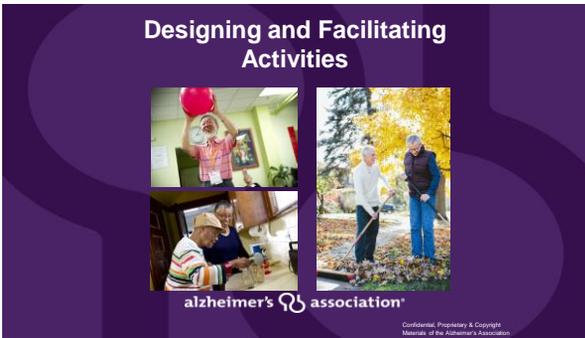
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### Designing Activities

- Emphasis on participation not the end result
- Incorporate retained long-term memory (LTM) and procedural memory
- Length of activities based on attention span
- Provide partially started activities
- Safety considerations

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### Facilitating Activities

- Effective communication is essential
- Be flexible
- Consider time of the day
- Use gestures and orienting cues
- Break up into individual steps
- Assist with difficult parts of the task
- Include the person through conversation

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### Facilitating Exercise



Participants at the Caring Companions program, JVS, 2017

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### The Reluctant Participant

- Don't ask...inform and direct
- Take over part of the task
- Give concrete cues
- Initiate the activity with the person observing

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## Activities by Stage of Alzheimer's Disease



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### Activity Design: Early Stage of Alzheimer's

- Can still participate in most of their usual activities of interest, especially if familiar task/environment
- May start to withdraw from activities of interest
- Provide activities that stimulate cognition
- Steps and task may have to be adjusted, simplified

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### Activity Design: Middle Stage of Alzheimer's

- Activities need to be simplified and modified further
- Work and task related activities can be comforting and purposeful
- Used to prevent and reduce distressing/disturbing behaviors
- Incorporate physical activity into the daily routine

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### Activity Design: Late Stage of Alzheimer's

- Multisensory activities
- Providing comfort
- Passive participation
- Connecting through touch
- Repetitive motion

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### Connecting: Late Stage of Dementia



Adapted from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzXz10FCVM>

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### Activity Examples and Resources



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### Activities with Music



- Boosts brain activity
- Evokes emotions that bring memories
- Musical aptitude and appreciation are long-lasting abilities
- Shift mood, manage stress and facilitate positive interactions
- Effective at each stage of dementia
- Examples: musical trivia, theme dinner or party based around of style of music (Hawaiian Luau, 70's Disco, Elvis, etc.), rhythm instruments, exercise

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### Clip from "Alive Inside"



From Alive Inside, 2014

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### Creative Arts Activities

- Form of communication
- Experience more important than end result
- Examples: painting, adult coloring books, scrapbook/memory books, collage, gardening, cooking




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### Sensory Stimulation Activities

- Senses connect our minds with the world around us
- A multisensory approach is best
- Draw on emotion and memory
- Participation can be active or passive
- Adaptable to each stage of dementia

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### Sensory Stimulation Activity Ideas

- Sensory theme kits
- Exploration boxes
- Textured materials/objects
- Hand massage/manicure
- Gardening
- Fidgets
- Looking at interesting colorful picture books
- Cooking activities
- Aromatherapy
- Herbal tea party
- Music
- Weighted blanket
- Brushing hair
- Nature walk
- Theme dinners/parties
- Sensory apron

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### Sensory Kit - Fall Theme



- Fall Sensory Kit**
- Pinecones
  - Leaves
  - Nature sounds CD
  - Cinnamon stick
  - Gourds
  - Mini pumpkins
  - Pictures of trees with leaves in fall color
  - Homemade apple sauce

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Sensory Kit - Beach Theme



**Beach Sensory Kit**

- Sand
- Shells
- Colorful gems
- Pictures of beaches
- Bottle of sunscreen
- Fruity drink with umbrella
- Beach ball
- Ocean wave or Caribbean music

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**Resources**

- <https://alzheimersactivities.wordpress.com>
- <http://www.alzstore.com/>
- [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)
- [www.myfreebingocards.com](http://www.myfreebingocards.com)
- [www.recreationaltherapy.com](http://www.recreationaltherapy.com)
- [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)
- Free Adult Coloring Pages <http://www.supercoloring.com/>
- [www.goldencarers.com](http://www.goldencarers.com)

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