



Handout from the Family Council December 2022. Zoom talk on
Dementia Care –Making the Most Out of Your Visits - speaker, Karen Tyrell, CPCA, CDCP

Dementia is not a disease but rather a syndrome.

Common symptoms include:

- ✿ Memory impairment
- ✿ Thinking impairment
- ✿ Judgement problems
- ✿ Communication problems
- ✿ Personality changes



Statistics from the Alzheimer Society of Canada:

- ✿ Over 500,000 Canadians are currently living with dementia (912,000 by 2030)
- ✿ 1.1 million Canadians are directly or indirectly affected by the disease
- ✿ 76,000 new cases are diagnosed every year

~ [Alzheimer Society of Canada website](#) - 2021

Important Considerations in Dementia Care:

- ✿ Lack of initiative or motivation (Apathy)
- ✿ Challenges in the ability to follow the steps or instructions
- ✿ Difficulty with concentration (Short attention span)
- ✿ Communication can become difficult if the speech/language area of the brain is affected, making regular conversation limited which can be a challenge for your visits/activities

Ways to Make the Most out of Your Visits:

- 🌸 Show up in a positive mood (*Your mood matters! Ideas: smile; wave; thumbs up; hug; positive tone of voice*)
- 🌸 Introduce yourself if you think they may not be sure
- 🌸 Avoid arguing or correcting the person
- 🌸 Deflecting any negative topics only after you have provided validation and reassurance
- 🌸 Use short, simple sentences
- 🌸 Give lots of **visual cues** such as pointing to the object you are talking about or making hand gestures
- 🌸 Incorporate meaningful & purposeful activities

Meaningful & Purposeful Activities:

- 🌸 Create a **purposeful** experience
- 🌸 Help to **improve** overall **well-being**
- 🌸 Give a feeling of **self-worth**
- 🌸 Promote a sense of **achievement**
- 🌸 Create a moment of **joy**
- 🌸 Address **psychological** well-being
- 🌸 Activities don't need to be elaborate...they can be **simple**

The 6 Dimensions of Wellness:

- 🌸 Physical
- 🌸 Social
- 🌸 Intellectual
- 🌸 Spiritual
- 🌸 Emotional
- 🌸 Occupational



Bill Hettler, MD Co-Founder, National Wellness Institute

Activities Ideas – Physical:

- ✿ Dance with them! (You can swing their arms slightly while they sit in a chair.)
- ✿ Stretch together - by watching a video or taking turns making up a stretch the other follows.
- ✿ Scarf or ball pass to each other.
- ✿ Go out for a walk.
- ✿ Play a sport such as balloon badminton

Activities Ideas – Social:

- ✿ Intergenerational: Visit with children or grandchildren
- ✿ Encourage a meeting with a friend or conversation with someone sitting next to them
- ✿ Small groups for tea
- ✿ Large groups such as entertainment or parties
- ✿ Cultural events

Activities Ideas – Intellectual:

- ✿ Word games
- ✿ Trivia questions or try having them finish familiar sayings
- ✿ Critical thinking games (Qwirkle)
- ✿ Play cards such as the game called, “Memory”
- ✿ Jigsaw puzzles
- ✿ Learning to use a tablet

Activities Ideas – Spiritual:

- ✿ Attending a spiritual service together
- ✿ Sit quietly together enjoying a peaceful calm moment while taking deep breaths
- ✿ Fresh air outside, bring in something from outside that is interesting or visit a garden
- ✿ Allow them to teach you about their spiritual beliefs & practices
- ✿ Reading scriptures, singing hymns; lighting candles (Menorah) sharing inspirational quotes or messages

Activities Ideas – Emotional:

- ✿ Pet therapy visits
- ✿ Make a memory book or box, reminisce about a special time or person, look through photo albums
- ✿ Colour, draw or paint
- ✿ Listen to favourite music

Activities Ideas – Occupational:

- ✿ Folding: laundry, towels, socks, etc.
- ✿ Sort items by colour, shape, size or groups.
 - **For women:** beads, buttons, fabric, hair accessories, etc.
 - **For men:** nuts & bolts, pens/pencils, photos, coins, etc.
- ✿ Cook: clean, cut/peel vegetables, etc.
- ✿ Bake: breads, cookies, muffins, pies, etc.
- ✿ Gardening: weeding, plant seeds

Sensory Stimulation:

Try incorporating activities that stimulate the 5 senses. (Sight; Sound; Smell; Touch; Taste)

Final Considerations:

- ✿ Choose an activity that will be **meaningful, purposeful & enjoyable** for the person.
- ✿ Be sure the activity meets their **abilities** & is not too physically or cognitively hard for them to accomplish.
- ✿ Watch for hand/finger dexterity, eye hand coordination, eye sight, hearing abilities.
- ✿ Don't focus on how well the activity is done; but rather **how well it was enjoyed**. Don't forget to offer praise!
- ✿ Make it **fun!** Success is measured in their smile or their body language

Karen's Top 3 Family Caregiver Survival Tips:

1. Take breaks
2. Talk it out
3. Never stop learning

Feel free to stay in touch. Contact us to discuss how Karen could be a speaker for your group or organization or to support families 1-1.