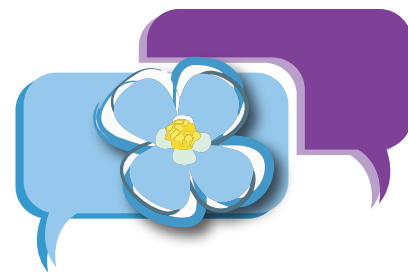


BEING DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Dementia Needs are Human Needs



By C. Angela Burrow

We often hear the phrase person-centered care related to frail people and our role to 'support unmet needs'. We should not make any presumptions about the meaning of person-centered care as it depends who we are supporting. A good place to start is to study Thomas Kitwood and his 'Flower of Needs'.

Kitwood's model of person-centered care guides us with Key Principles. Attend to the whole person, Each person is unique, Give respect to their past, Focus on positives and strengths, Nourish attachments, Maximize freedom and minimize control, Don't just give, receive as well,

FLORA'S STORY

Flora, who was diagnosed with dementia, was a new Resident in a Memory Care Community. On the surface she seemed to be content with less cognitive decline than some of her neighbors. Her physical abilities afforded her more independence. She was able to enjoy her meals after finding her way to the dining room unaided. She needed help with taking her medications and at her shower time. She did not socialize with other Residents in their living room or in the community organized activities. She liked to walk through the hallway, often stopping to straighten a floral decoration or other décor. As she seemed content, she was left alone much of the time. Slowly, through the days and weeks, Flora started to take ownership. She would gather wet paper towels and wipe down the tables and counter tops in the craft room. She 'found' some Swiffer dusters and at the end of the day after dinner she would dust and straighten chairs in the common areas. This story is important as not everyone is as confident or able as she was at her stage of dementia. Could the family and staff have done better enabling her in the first few days after she moved in? Not enough questions were asked related to 'What was important to Flora' and 'How may we best support her'. She had been a homemaker all her adult life and, if she had been encouraged to help more in the community, her transition from her home for decades, could have and should

have, gone more comfortably for her.

DORIS' STORY

"My Mom's most cherished loves in her life were her family and her faith. As a little girl at the age of 10 she began playing the organ and piano in her church for Sunday services. This continued for the rest of her life until she retired. I mention this because my Mom played all of her music by ear, or she memorized it. She could read music but her piano teacher taught her to memorize all her pieces because she may be asked to play somewhere and not have her music with her. This gift would become a valuable treasure during her journey with dementia. Many great memories were made and shared during those days. One memory that was shared with me was a

time when the activity director was reading a bible story about 'David the future King' to a small group of residents in memory care. My Mom walked by and stopped to listen. As the story was finishing Mom turned and whispered something to one of the caregivers. That caregiver then helped her over to the piano and she began to play hymns for the group to sing together. When I was told about this it brought me so much joy and comfort in knowing at that moment my Mom was inspired to share her faith in the way that she knew how, and that she

felt a part of this group. Those activities that seem so small at the time have a profound meaning to many people living with dementia".

Story told by Leslie S. Daughter of Doris



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