

MEMORIES



- Memories may appear to have disappeared but there are several ways to reach the same destination. If the route is blocked try an alternative route....
- Reading Writing and Arithmetic. There is evidence that retraining in the 3 R's can help restore communication and independence if done on a regular basis.

THERE IS ALWAYS A REASON

- Sundowning [a difficult time around 4-6pm] can be due to it having been a stressful time of day in the past, doing familiar activities can help calm.
- There may be 2 ways of interpreting words, actions or pictures. Both can be true at the same time.
- Wandering may be due to feeling lost, responding to an hallucination or looking for a purpose.
- Depression can accompany dementia.



ACTIONS

- There is Always a reason. Sometimes obvious to them and not to you.
- May be responding to an hallucination.
- Sleep patterns can get disrupted, not aware of difference between night & day.
- Might not recognise an item or know what to do, unless they see you use it.



WORDS

- The meaning of words may be disconnected from their sound; so may not be understood.
- May not be able to construct a logical sentence in reply, may produce a word salad. Talking about something familiar might enable them to join in.
- May not understand letters in words so reading can be difficult (need context).
- The ability to sing remains even when speech goes.



SEE IT FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE

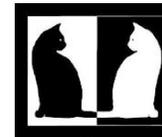
THEY MAY SEE IT DIFFERENTLY TO YOU

- May feel like a foreigner not knowing the language. May only see part of the picture.
- Children have to learn social skills. In dementia one can lose social inhibitions.
- Incontinence may just be forgetting to go.
- Loss of dignity; try elastic waists, tube socks, reversible T shirts, no buttons.



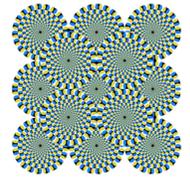
QUESTIONS

- What time is it?, *might just mean* "I have no idea what I am meant to be doing".
- Can I go home?, *often means* "I do not feel comfortable here".
- When is X coming?, *perhaps means* "I am feeling lost & alone".
- Listen to the meaning behind the question and reassure.



VISUAL SPATIAL MUDDLE

- Loss of blue purple green colours, confused by strange lighting, busy patterns.
- May not recognise self in a mirror and think it is someone else.
- Pouring liquids can be dangerous. May be frightened by carpets/floors.
- May misjudge the edge of the table or bathroom furniture unless distinct or contrasting colours.



FEELINGS REMAIN WHEN FACTS ARE FORGOTTEN

- End a visit calmly and positively, to ensure good feelings remain.
- Explain absent people without telling lies.
- Feelings are often mirrored.



Frightened Agitated
Aggressive Paranoid
versus
Smiles Encouragement
Reassurance Calmness

These SPECIAL strategies are explained in the book
Contented Dementia

HALLUCINATIONS

are often not recognised.
May be uncertain what is real.

TIME TRAVEL

for example

- May think it is 1960 (when X not born Y not married Z still alive).
- May revert to Childhood Patterns.



SITUATIONS that can precipitate agitation or confusion

- Unfamiliar People / Places
- Large Gatherings
- A Task that is too complicated
- Noise Strange Lights
- Travel Airports Stations
- Too much choice/ too many tasks
- Illness or Tiredness.



WHEN AGITATED

- Simplify/calm the environment
- Don't ask questions or overwhelm with words
- Reassure, show what to do, make a cup of tea
- Too many people - take to a quieter place.
- **Engage in a familiar activity**, music, a walk
- Try lavender hand massage, family pet, gentle touch.



CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

DIFFICULT TO WHO?

- Aggression often due to frustration or misinterpretation of events, reflections in windows or mirrors. Always a reason.
- Unwillingness to 'cooperate' may be due to **fear** eg showers may not have been used in their childhood;
- Exercises to stimulate the brain can help, such as Reading aloud, Writing, Mental arithmetic.
- Hide or remove inappropriate items. Limit choices; one instruction at a time.



CARERS FAMILY OR OTHERS

- Feel sad, discouraged, overwhelmed, alone, resentful, angry, embarrassed, trapped, frightened bewildered Grieve for what was or even what never was.
- Carers need regular breaks, can become exhausted /depressed / deny such / hide it well.
- Carers may feel guilty if the person goes into a care home, especially if they improve. Improvement is not necessarily due to the quality of care.



WHEN VISITING

- Introduce yourself with context.
- Wear cheerful clothes.
- Approach from the front. Don't tap on the back.
- Talk about hobbies, or subjects, that meant a great deal earlier in their life.
- Show videos or pictures of events or outings.
- Make sure your visit leaves positive feelings, far more important than the the amount of time spent.



RESOURCES

- Contented Dementia .. Oliver James
- And still the music plays... Graham Stokes
- Dementia Frank & Linda's story .. Louise Morse
- The 36 hour day...Nancy Mace et al
- Insight into dementia Rosemary Hurlley
- Alzheimer's from the Inside Out .. Richard Taylor
- Still Alice .. Lisa Genova
- Keeper.. Andrea Gillies.



DEMENTIA www.gloriousopportunity.org

Can seem daunting fearful certainly a challenge but also contain beauty

**Always a reason
Feelings remain
Patterns continue**

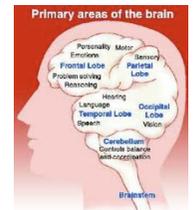
Everyone is different. Those with dementia will relate to some but not all of the following insights.



THERE ARE MANY CAUSES AFFECTING DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BRAIN

BUT ONCE ONE HAS DEMENTIA IT IS IRRELEVANT

- **Alzheimers** alteration chemistry/structure changes
- **Vascular Dementia/stroke** oxygen lack
- **Dementia with Lewy Bodies** in nerve cells
- **Frontal lobe dementia** personality/ behaviour
- Other diseases such as Parkinson's may also lead to dementia.



MORE THAN LOSS OF MEMORY

- Reduced attention span, remembering, ability to do things, understand or communicate. increased agitation or confusion.
- May get lost or not recognise people, may smell things, see or hear animals or people who are not there.
- Sometimes caused by amyloid plaques which can block pathways in the brain.
- Muscles die if not used, so do neurons. The spiritual never dies.

