



MEET ME IN MEMORY CARE



DIGNITY FORWARD APPROACH



*Dedicated to our residents,
past, present and future . . .*

*We honor their individuality
and celebrate their stories.*

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Introduction: Evolving Independence



Alzheimer's and related dementias affect individuals and their families in many ways, especially independence. The lives of those living with dementia are gradually reshaped; as memory, function, judgment, and mobility decline, so does their sense of independence. Families often face difficult decisions in determining when and how much to assist in an ever-changing landscape of providing care while preserving dignity.

Although these progressive diseases affect cognition, they do not diminish a person's core values. Individuals living with dementia may share similar diagnoses, but their symptoms, behaviors, and personal needs can differ greatly. Respecting emotions, sensitivities, and preferences – in effect, who they are – helps preserve the independence and the resulting self-esteem they deserve.

Safeguarding self-worth can result in reduced agitation behaviors and improved quality of life. It's really quite simple – when one feels respected, relationships with caregivers can become more trusted in nature, and participation in meaningful activities may strengthen.

Effective communication and adaptive tools and aids help to achieve this goal by promoting a sense of autonomy while completing daily tasks. Each situation is unique, and a balance exists between safe, practical independence and total reliance. With techniques utilizing eye contact, warm expression, approachable demeanor and patience, we're confident you will find yours.



Cornerstones of Assistive Support



Communication

Effective communication with someone living with dementia relies on the ability and willingness to adapt to changing behaviors, to use kind yet unpatronizing expression, and to maintain simplicity without undermining confidence. Address by first name, use short, simple sentences, maintain eye contact, and speak in a calm, clear voice. Avoid open-ended questions; yes or no, or choice of two or three answers, are best. If necessary to repeat, calmly use the exact same phrase.

Involve the Person in Decision-Making

Whenever possible, include your loved one in selecting colors, decorations, and other adaptive choices. Choosing green or yellow utensils, oval or rectangular cabinet labels, or shower chair style can help to preserve a sense of autonomy.

A Supportive Environment

Home is a place of comfort, safety and familiarity, and always associated with a loving environment. Modifications to accommodate special needs for a person living with dementia need not necessarily be overwhelming or expensive but may reduce risk and help to maintain a sense of independence.

Routine

Routines are essential; predictability offers the ability to maintain a sense of control. Not all routines are able to be continued for someone living with dementia, but a few small adjustments may help to preserve personal lifestyle habits. For example, if your loved one always started the day by brewing a pot of coffee and filling their favorite mug, try setting up the pot ahead of time, with their mug on the counter as a cue, and enjoy the morning brew together.

Adaptive Tools for Support



Adaptive aids are not only helpful in preserving independence, but diverse in their ability to do so. While these tools can enhance quality of life for those living with dementia and provide a measure of relief for caregivers, it is important to note that every situation is unique. Carefully select and implement these tools into daily routines as you determine to be in the best interest of your loved one, and with their dignity always at the forefront.

Introduce adaptive tools early whenever possible, and one at a time to avoid confusion. Keep items simple and avoid complex gadgets. Involve your loved one in selecting items, and demonstrate how to use them. Keep them visible in the spot they're most likely to be needed. Your goal of seeing their potential and not their limitations is within reach!

Mobility

- Grab bars and non-slip mats
- Walkers, quad canes

Dining

- Weighted utensils; cushioned handles; smaller spoon surfaces
- Plates with raised lip; scoop bowls
- Easy grip, spill resistant cups; one-way straws
- Hydration reminder cup
- Non-slip placemats
- Stylish, discreet dining scarves to protect clothing (rather than an adult bib)

Dressing

- Comfortable, stress-free clothing
- Tagless labels, flat seams, breathable fabric
- Magnetic or velcro closures
- Stay-dressed design with discreet zipper (later stage compulsive disrobing)

Bathing

- Chair or bench
- Long handled brush, sponge
- Plugs that change color at safe water temperature
- Anti-flood plugs for sink and tub

Therapeutic

- Music; digital audio players or portable Bluetooth speakers paired with a phone or tablet
- Digital photo frames
- Therapy doll, robotic animal
- Adult coloring books
- Books and movies
- Assorted board and card games
- Sensory boxes
- Craft supplies; theme boxes
- Favorite hobbies; gardening tools, etc.
- Walking route; explore nature
- Support groups

Technology

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The effectiveness of assistive tools often depend on cognitive stage of decline, especially technological devices. While they can help clear hurdles, their use must be thoughtfully planned based on each unique situation. One-touch dial picture phones, smart watches with location features, automated medication dispensers, and digital calendar clocks are a few tools that may be helpful.

For the caregiver, a virtual assistant like Alexa or Siri can help with quick memos and reminders. A computer, tablet, or smartphone can help with scheduling shopping deliveries and remote banking.

Home Environment

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- Free of hazards: remove area rugs; they can be a trip hazard and also mistaken as a “hole” in the floor, causing anxiety. Secure cords and cables. Minimize clutter.
 - Solid colors whenever possible for furniture and flooring. “Busy floral or geometric patterns” may be fashionable, but for individuals living with dementia, the brain’s ability to process visual information is diminished, and they may find it confusing and difficult to navigate. Sofa and chair covers can easily accomplish this.
 - Maximize light; brighten any dark areas; minimize shadows
 - Bright colored stair markers
 - Cabinet labels; pictures may help identify what is inside
 - Colored towels
 - Motion-sensor night lights
 - Auto-off appliances, and/or automatic timers to allow use only at certain times
 - Door & window sensors
 - Safe, secure areas for chemicals and other potentially toxic products



Know When to Seek Professional Help



This resource guide will offer some basic ideas for adaptive tools to help support caring for a loved one with dementia. Numerous community professionals and agencies can also provide valuable guidance, and we encourage you to seek their assistance. Here are just a few suggestions:

- **Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline:** 1-800-272-3900 offers free support, crisis assistance, and local referrals to help provided needed resources
- **Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA):** 1-866-238-8484 or <https://alzfdn.org/caregiving-resources> offers assistance from licensed, dementia-trained social workers
- **Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs):** 1-800-677-1116 can help locate local agencies for home care, meals, and respite care
- <https://www.communityresourcefinder.org/> is an online tool from AARP and the Alzheimer's Association to aid in locating local adult day care, support groups, and elder law attorneys

Get Support



Watercrest Senior Living associates are always available to welcome, to care, and to serve both you and your loved one. Our associates receive specialized dementia care training and are skilled in behavioral interventions and persuasion techniques that validate, redirect and comfort our residents during their times of need. Please do not hesitate if you find yourself in a difficult situation, to report the incident to a Resident Care Specialist, Wellness Nurse or Memory Care Director.

Resources:



Alzheimer's Association www.alz.org



Suggested Readings



An Absent Mind, by Eric Rill

Seventy-one, and a man used to controlling those around him, Saul struggles to make peace with his disconnected family before Alzheimer's consumes his sanity.

His ramblings, humor, emotions, lucid moments, and confusion are laid bare, as well as the thoughts and feelings of his loved ones: his wife, Monique, conflicted and depressed...caring, yet angry; his daughter, Florence, compassionate, yet proper and reserved; his son, Joey, self-centered and narcissistic, seemingly indifferent to his family's challenges; and his doctor, an Alzheimer's specialist, who cares for Saul until his final days.

From the beginning Saul and his family know how it has to end, because no one has ever outsmarted Alzheimer's. But as they navigate the meandering road that will eventually bring Saul's demise, they leave behind their once disconnected lives and come together to weather their difficult journey.

Heartfelt and moving, this lauded novel, winner of 2014 gold medals from the Independent Publisher Book Awards, Readers' Favorite Book Awards, and the Living Now Book Award for Inspirational Fiction, will appeal to fans of Lisa Genova's *Still Alice* or Nicholas Sparks's *The Notebook*.

Chicken Soup for the Soul: Living with Alzheimer's & Other Dementia 101 Stories of Caregiving, Coping, and Compassion, by Amy Newmark and Angela Timashenka Geiger

Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia? You are not alone. With 101 encouraging and inspiring stories by others like you, this book is a source of support and encouragement throughout your caregiving journey.

Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia affect millions of people, and this book is especially for caregivers. This collection, a joint project with the Alzheimer's Association, is filled with 101 stories of love and lessons from others like you, will support and encourage you as you care for your loved one.

Coach Broyles' Playbook for Alzheimer's Caregivers, by Frank Broyles

It wasn't always easy for me to find the answers my family needed about Alzheimer's disease, and at times I was frustrated and confused. I promised myself that one day I would share all that I had learned-from my research and my experience-with other families that were dealing with Alzheimer's. This dream came true when the Playbook was created and made available to my fellow Arkansans. We received calls and letters from so many people thanking us for sharing our story and information that I decided to make my dream bigger, and share the Playbook with people across our country. I gathered my team, and together, with the help and support of many Arkansan people and companies, we were able to generate the funding and expertise needed to make this Playbook for anyone wanting information on how to care for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease. It is my hope that you can benefit from my experience.

Creating Moments of Joy: Along the Alzheimer's Journey, by Jolene Brackey

Jolene Brackey has a vision: that we will soon look beyond the challenges of Alzheimer's disease to focus more of our energies on creating moments of joy. When people have short-term memory loss, their lives are made up of moments. We are not able to create perfectly wonderful days for people with dementia or Alzheimer's, but we can create perfectly wonderful moments, moments that put a smile on their faces and a twinkle in their eyes. Five minutes later, they will not remember what we did or said, but the feeling that we left them with will linger. The new edition of *Creating Moments of Joy* is filled with more practical advice sprinkled with hope, encouragement, new stories, and generous helpings of humor. In this volume, Brackey reveals that our greatest teacher is having cared for and loved someone with Alzheimer's and that often what we have most to learn about is ourselves.

Learning to Speak Alzheimer's: A Groundbreaking Approach for Everyone Dealing with the Disease, by Joanne Koenig Coste

More than four million Americans suffer from Alzheimer's, and as many as twenty million have close relatives or friends with the disease. Revolutionizing the way we perceive and live with Alzheimer's, Joanne Koenig Coste offers a practical approach to the emotional well-being of both patients and caregivers that emphasizes relating to patients in their own reality. Her accessible and comprehensive method, which she calls habilitation, works to enhance communication between carepartners and patients and has proven successful with thousands of people living with dementia. *Learning to Speak Alzheimer's* also offers hundreds of practical tips, including how to:

- cope with the diagnosis and adjust to the disease's progression
- help the patient talk about the illness
- face the issue of driving
- make meals and bath times as pleasant as possible
- adjust room design for the patient's comfort
- deal with wandering, paranoia, and aggression

Lewy, Mom and Me: A Caregiver's Story, by Peggy Bushy

In her seventies, Peggy Bushy's mother, Francesca, started telling unbelievable stories. She claimed that people were invading her home and trying to kill her. She also became anxious and reclusive. For several discouraging years, Bushy searched in vain for a reason for her mother's behavior.

Finally, Francesca was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia. Although it's the third-most-common cause of dementia, Bushy was unable to find much information on the disease, and the medical community was frustratingly unhelpful.

Lewy, Mom, and Me is the book that Bushy wished had been available when her mother was first diagnosed. It details her personal journey of discovery, with all its challenges and revelations, and is written in a compassionate, empathetic style that will comfort any reader dealing with a parent's decline.

Bushy explains how she learned to accept the changes in her mother and to support Francesca emotionally as she grappled with her frightening illness. She also describes what was involved in caring for her mother first at home, then in long-term care, and finally in hospice.

Part memoir and part survival guide, this compelling testimony offers support and information for family caregivers of aging parents.

My Two Elaines: Learning, Coping, and Surviving as an Alzheimer's Caregiver, by Martin J. Schreiber

Former governor of Wisconsin Marty Schreiber has seen his beloved wife, Elaine, gradually transform from the woman who had gracefully entertained in the Executive Residence to one who sometimes no longer recognizes him as her husband. In *My Two Elaines: Learning, Coping, and Surviving as an Alzheimer's Caregiver*, Marty candidly counsels those taking on this caregiving role. More than an account of Marty's struggles in caring for his wife, *My Two Elaines* also offers sage advice that respects the one with Alzheimer's while maintaining the caregiver's health. As two-thirds of those with Alzheimer's are women, he offers special guidance for men thrust into an unexpected job. With patience, adaptability, and even a sense of humor, Marty shows how love continues for his Second Elaine.

Still Alice, by Lisa Genova

From New York Times bestselling author and neuroscientist Lisa Genova comes the definitive—and illuminating—novel about Alzheimer’s disease. Now a major motion picture starring Oscar winner Julianne Moore!

Alice Howland is proud of the life she worked so hard to build. At fifty years old, she’s a cognitive psychology professor at Harvard and a world-renowned expert in linguistics with a successful husband and three grown children. When she becomes increasingly disoriented and forgetful, a tragic diagnosis changes her life—and her relationship with her family and the world—forever. As she struggles to cope with Alzheimer’s, she learns that her worth is comprised of far more than her ability to remember.

At once beautiful and terrifying, *Still Alice* is a moving and vivid depiction of life with early-onset Alzheimer’s disease that is as compelling as *A Beautiful Mind* and as unforgettable as *Ordinary People*.

Surviving Alzheimer’s: Practical tips and soul-saving wisdom for caregivers, by Paula Spencer Scott

The book recommended by dementia experts and family caregivers as the most complete, practical guide to Alzheimer’s and other dementia – now updated and expanded through end-of-life care.

This new edition of *Surviving Alzheimer’s* offers the best, most current thinking on how to help a loved one with memory loss and related symptoms without sacrificing YOU. You’ll learn:

- What’s behind odd, frustrating behaviors like repetition, wandering, personality changes, bathing resistance, and aggression – and what you can do
- How to defuse resentment, guilt, and family friction
- What to say for better communication and more cooperation
- Special advice for spouses, out-of-town caregivers, and other specific situations
- 100’s of confidence-raising solutions from top doctors, social workers, dementia specialists, and family caregivers

The 36-Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for People Who Have Alzheimer’s Disease, Related Dementias, and Memory Loss, by Nancy L. Mace, MA, and Peter V. Rabins, MD, MPH

The most trusted guide for caring for persons with Alzheimer’s disease, memory loss, and dementia disorders-now revised and updated with practical and legal advice and compassionate guidance for families and caregivers.

When someone in your family suffers from Alzheimer’s disease or other related memory loss diseases, both you and your loved one face immense challenges. For over thirty years, this book has been the trusted bible for families affected by dementia disorders. Now completely revised and updated, this guide features the latest information on the causes of dementia, managing the early stages of dementia, the prevention of dementia, and finding appropriate living arrangements for the person who has dementia when home care is no longer an option.

You’ll learn:

- The basic facts about dementia
- How to deal with problems arising in daily care-meals, exercise, personal hygiene, and safety
- How to cope with an impaired person’s false ideas, suspicion, anger, and other mood problems
- How to get outside help from support groups, friends, and agencies
- Financial and legal issues you must address.

Comprehensive and compassionate, *The 36-Hour Day* is the only guide you need to help your family through this difficult time.

