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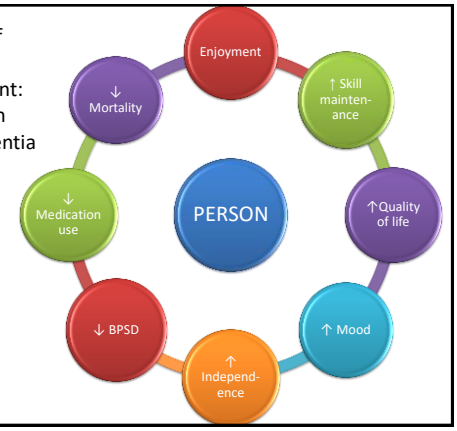
Facilitating Living: Using Activities to Enable and Engage People with Dementia

Alissa Westphal
Lecturer in Dementia Care
Academic Unit for Psychiatry of Old Age, Department of Psychiatry
The University of Melbourne
alissaw@unimelb.edu.au

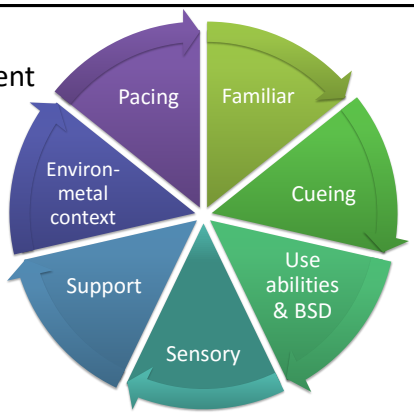
Benefits of activity engagement: The Person with dementia



Benefits of activity engagement: Those providing care

Key things we need to know about the **PERSON**

Activity Engagement Principles



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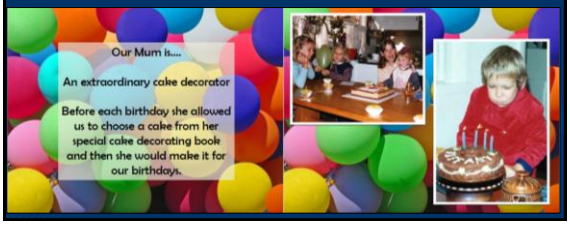
Using Familiar Activities

Provide FAMILIAR activity opportunities that are meaningful and are consistent or connect with the Person's past roles, routines, task sequences, interests, preferences, memories and activity contexts.



Cueing to Support Engagement

Use CUES to attract or re-focus the Person's attention, and invite and support their engagement.

- Types of cues
  - Visual e.g. gestures, signs
  - Verbal e.g. direct or indirect
  - Tactile e.g. touch to guide
  - Olfactory
  - Other senses

Cueing to Support Engagement

What cues tell the person:
- *What to do?*
- *When to start?*
- *How to start?*
- *What to do next?*
- *When/How to finish?*

COLOUR & CONTRAST: High contrast meal set up: 25% increase in food intake, 84% increase in fluid intake.
Dunne et al , 2004

Utilise Abilities and BSD

Provide activities that utilise the Person's ABILITIES and BEHAVIOURAL SYMPTOMS that are not distressing or presenting risk issues.

- Focus on abilities
  - No matter how severe…
  - Successful engagement
- Behavioural symptoms:
  - Abilities the person is using.
  - May be normalised or utilised in a more purposeful way. Examples:
    - Wandering & collecting other's belongings
    - Fiddling resulting in stripping

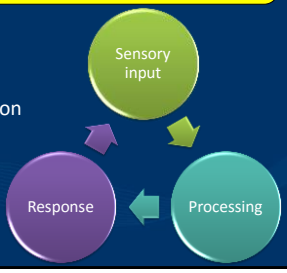
Repetitive Activities

1-2 step activities:
- Sorting
- Ripping/tearing
- Sweeping
- Walking
- Winding
- Untangling
- Counting
- Colouring, painting
- Throwing
- Cleaning …

Stimulating the Senses

Provide an appropriate level of SENSORY STIMULATION to enhance the Person's engagement, and arouse or relax them.

- Senses guide our engagement
- Sensory imbalances
- Under and over stimulation vs 'just right' fit
- Excess stimulation → overwhelm
- Sensory preferences



Supporting Activity Engagement

Skilfully SUPPORT the Person's engagement by unobtrusively assisting with the components they are unable to do or have difficulty doing.

- Doing WITH not to
- Offering support but not taking over
- Focus on process
- Assist with: identifying activities, set-up, initiation, planning, organizing, sequencing, problem solving, progress between steps, terminating …
- Respond to changing abilities & needs
- Safety and risk
- Modifying or grading

Supporting Activity Engagement

- Task simplification:
  - Number of steps, objects, choices
  - Distractions
  - Set up e.g. labels
  - Duration
  - Rules
- Communication:
  - Shorten sentences
  - Demonstrate
  - Speed

Supporting Activity Engagement

Mild dementia	Moderate dementia	Severe dementia
Doing Competition	Experience sensory effects	Arouse or relax
Shorten sentences	Limit requests to actions	Demonstrate single actions
Breakdown 2 steps	Breakdown 1 step	Facilitate actions
Help start, finish & problem solve	Use repetitive single step activities	Select sensory stimulation
30 minutes	15-20 minutes	10 minutes or less

Adapted from Wendy Hall's work

Activities in an Environmental Context

Set-up the ENVIRONMENT to provide accessible activity opportunities the Person can engage in at their own volition, or with prompting or support.

- Activity 'stations'
- Visibly accessible and inviting
- Positioning
- Provides 1+ activity
- Taps into the familiar & incorporates cues
- Comfort
- Privacy

Pacing of Engagement

PACE activities throughout the day to provide a flow that ensures the Person has periods of both activity and rest, and allows them to set the speed of engagement.

- Low and high activity times
- Tapering intensity
- Variety in types of activity
- Time to recover, rest and process
- Allow the Person to set the pace

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Questions?

For additional information about the content of this presentation please contact:

Alissa Westphal

alissaw@unimelb.edu.au

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