Caregiver Connections
An Educational Webinar Series With The Experts

The presentation will begin shortly. Thank you for your patience!

www.dukefamilysupport.org
919-660-7510
What are we doing today?.... and How do we do it well?

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Who are we?

Occupational Therapists who teach, do research and work in the community through a campus program focused on aging

Ryan
- Served as a direct service provider for people living with dementia and their care partners through the OC CARES program
- Currently directs a program focused on providing home modifications through the Orange County Department on Aging

Jenny
- Was the team leader for the OC CARES program in Orange County that provided support to care partners of people with dementia
- Has been an occupational therapist for 30+ years, working in home, community & facility settings
Today’s Goals

Understand:

• **Why** activity is important and beneficial
• **How** activity routines affect other aspects of our lives, including rest/sleep
• **What** is happening that makes doing activity different and sometimes challenging
• **How** we can build activities that match capacities
• **Which** environmental features warrant attention
Why Activity?

- Improve daily life
- Enable more participation
- Reduce challenging situations and amount of help needed
- Help manage and balance time use
Challenging Situations

- Rummaging
- Inappropriate Self-Touching
- Managing Stress
- Balancing Time
- Apathy/Dissociated
- Anger/Hospitality
- Suspicion/Paranoia
- Life’s other demands
- Miscommunication
- Frustration
- Wandering
- Shadowing
- Miscommunication
Daily Routines & Moderate Stage Dementia

Communication:
- less reliance on complex verbal communication
- “Reading” the communicator

Offering Assistance:
- more assistance needed to initiate and complete tasks
- more care needed with physical approach

Relaxing the rules.....even more
- consider the relative importance of “right”
- when is timing critical & when is it not?
Building Activities: History, Capacity, and Environment

Environment and Sensory Challenges

Capacities of Person with Dementia AND their family

History and Story of Person with Dementia AND Family
Areas that Change:
Memory Center
Expressive Language
Language Comprehension

Sensory Perception
Emotional Response
Executive Control Center
Motor Skills

Areas that sustain longer:
The Capacity to Hear
Music and Rhythm
Routines & Muscle Memory
Other Language (Rude Language)
Motor Skills
Hippocampus

The learning and memory center

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Emotion/Stress Response

- Fight
- Flight
- Find More
Rummaging
I’m Hungry/I need to clean.

Wandering
I feel isolated/I need to get to work

Anger/Hostility
I’m Uncomfortable

Suspicion/Paranoia
I’m Confused

Inappropriate Self-Touching
I need sensory input

Shadowing
I feel anxious or lost

Apathy/Disengaged
I don’t connect with activity around me
Building Activities: Routine and History

Environment and Sensory Challenges

Capacities of Person with Dementia AND their family

History and Story of Person with Dementia AND Family
Memory and Routine

Human Memory

- Sensory Memory (< 1 sec)
- Short-term Memory (Working Memory) (< 1 min)
- Long-term Memory (life-time)
  - Explicit Memory (conscious)
    - Declarative Memory (facts, events)
  - Implicit Memory (unconscious)
    - Procedural Memory (skills, tasks)

Episodic Memory (events, experiences)
Semantic Memory (facts, concepts)
What are some examples of activities that might relate to someone’s history or life story?

I was a scientist
No Grandma.
One hand,
like this.

Whoops I
made a
scarf.
How might family or relationship history and routine play into activity building?
Building Activities: Capacities

Environment and Sensory Challenges

Capacities of Person with Dementia AND their family

History and Story of Person with Dementia AND Family
Areas of Strengths and Impairments

- Memory
- Language
- Mobility
- Mood
What qualities might make some activities more difficult than others?

• Steps
• Tools/Objects
• Choices
• Abstract Ideas
• Directions
• Meaning/Familiarity
• The person asking
• Time of Day
How can we build activities to fit the person’s and the family’s capacities?

**Take Necessary Time**
- Listening to Music
- Reminiscing while making a photo book
- Resting on Walks
- Stir water and flour in a bowl

**Simplify the Activity**
- Do a simple craft
- Simple puzzle
- Counting money
- Playing a simpler card game
- Revising a document

**Communicate Effectively**
- Provide simple instructions for computer use
- Ask for help with washing dishes
- Request a song on the Piano
- Provide a model for making a greeting card

**Relax the Rules**
- Fold laundry incorrectly
- Play a puzzle game with new rules
- Learn to knit
- Build an ugly birdhouse
BOOKEND ROUTINES:
Day to Different Day

Waking Up
Easing into the day; first activities; interpersonal connection; introduction of light; blood sugar

Going to Sleep
Transition to sleeping space; nighttime rituals; intake at bedtime; B&B issues; soothing rituals
The “Balance” of Activity and Rest

A new way to think about routines:

What is necessary to get done each day?
- Which of these things are manageable?
- Why are other things challenging?

What is enjoyable to do each day?
- How can these things be given more time?
- Can they set the stage for doing challenging things?
Routine is our friend...Usually.

What about the capacities of the family?
- Time
- Readiness
- Resources

Who else’s routines are important factors in this situation?
Building Activities: Capacities

Environment and Sensory Challenges

Capacities of Person with Dementia AND their family

History and Story of Person with Dementia AND Family
Building Activities: Environment

Environment and Sensory Challenges

Capacities of Person with Dementia AND their family

History and Story of Person with Dementia AND Family
Changes in Sensory Perception

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Amygdala

Hippocampus
How do you think we could modify the environment to fit certain activities?

- Lighting
- Noise
- Temperature
- Socialness
- Visual Field
- Positioning
- Intuitiveness
- Welcoming-ness
Integrating new routines for COVID-19 context

Supporting hand washing practices
- Demonstration / Signage
- Playing music while washing
- Using hand sanitizer as an alternative

Social Distancing
- Stating other people’s needs as reason for distance
- Simple physical cues (arm’s distance, three big steps)
- Anticipate social connections before venturing out (busy times of day, high traffic places, people you expect to encounter)

Mask Wearing
- Serving as the Example
- Using alternatives: bandana open at the bottom/face shield/hat with netting

What Has Worked for You?
Building Activities: History, Capacity, and Environment

- Environment and Sensory Challenges
- Capacities of Person with Dementia AND their family
- History and Story of Person with Dementia AND Family
Challenging situations are most often not intentional

Modify activity to where person is at today

The goal is engagement (not new learning)
Take Home Points

• Activity can be beneficial for:
  – Quality of Life
  – Decreasing Stress

• Activity needs to match the situation:
  – History
  – Capacity
  – Environment

• Take your time and take it slow. Things will change, but so can you.
Questions?

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Thank you for joining us today!

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