

# The Power of Reminiscence

*Simple Activities with a Profound Effect*

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**What is Reminiscence?**

# Components

- Pleasant memories and experiences
- Focus on 5 senses
- Tangible prompts and/or items
- Life Review
- Individual and/or group
- Formal/informal



# Reminiscence for Dementia



- Plays on strengths
- Stimulates brain
- Inclusive/adaptable
- Tailored to individual abilities
- Works with other supports
- Nonpharmacological

**What does  
Reminiscence do  
for us?**

# Benefits

- Comfort
- Fulfillment
- Improved mood and behavior
- Better cognition
- Reduced apathy/confusion
- Higher confidence and self-worth
- Reduced depression
- Connection and belongingness
- Increased sense of agency



# Benefits for Caregivers

- Reduced stress/burnout
- Increased connection to loved one
- Improve communication
- Reduction in grief
- Adjusts our expectations



# Validation



- Unique individuals
- All have value
- Reason behind behavior
- Cannot force behavior change
- Acceptance and non-judgement
- Active listening
- Empathy



# Setup

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- Consider timing
- Comfortable sitting area
- Quiet environment
- Easy access to any items
- Be prepared with memory suggestions
- Be ready for potential redirection



# Reminiscence Activities

- Music Hour
- Photo Flip
- Memory Meal



# Music Hour

## Before

- Pick songs you know they like or songs from when they were younger (long-term memory)
- Find safe/accessible instruments that you think your loved one would like playing

## During

- Sing/play along
- Dance
- Smile/laugh
- Ask questions

# Photo Flip

## Before

- Gather photos/albums/videos of memories
- Can also use with books/magazines about topics of interest
- Make sure they are accessible to the individual
- Remove any photos you know to cause upset

## During

- Briefly share a memory related to a photo of you with the person
- Prompt them to choose a photo and share a memory
- Ask questions that prompt further description
- Smile/laugh/mirror their expressions
- Follow their lead/provide validation

# Memory Meal

## Before

- Identify favorite foods/meals
- Make sure they can still tolerate those foods (or if recipe needs adapting)
- Identify if they'd like to be part of making the meal/are able to assist with an accessible part of the prep
- Check-in with yourself before the meal and make sure you still feel up for doing it

## During

- Prompt them to describe the first time they remember having this meal (while prepping and/or eating)
- Share any memories you have of having this meal with them
- Mirror their expressions/sounds
- Provide positive reflection (i.e., I'm so glad you are enjoying this)

# Encouraging Reminiscence -Friendly Living

## The Environment

- Keep favorite items in most frequented spaces
- Provide easy access to items so they can be used independently/semi-independently
- Support safe access to outdoor spaces that they enjoy

## The Interactions

- Add reminiscence to everyday occurrences
- Use active listening skills
- Prompt re-telling of stories you know your loved one likes to tell
- Engage in your own supports so you can practice positive reappraisal of your reality

# Improving Quality of Life

- Reduce symptom frequency and severity
- Decrease caregiver stress
- Increase feelings of connection all around



# Questions?

*References available upon request*

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