

*Changing the Culture of
Dementia Care
One Mind at a Time*

Positive®
Approach

GEMS®

Dementia **Aware**

Dementia **Knowledgeable**

Dementia **Skilled**

Dementia **Competent**

www.teepasnow.com



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Navigating the Journey of Dementia

Normal vs. Not Normal Aging:

Normal Aging:

Slower to think

Slower to do

Hesitates more

More likely to 'look before leaping'

Know the person but not the name

Pause to find words

Reminded of the past

Harder

Not Normal Aging:

Can't think the same

Can't do like before

Can't get started

Can't seem to move on

Doesn't think it out at all

Can't place the person

Words won't come – even later

Confused about past versus now

Very different!

Ten Early Warning Signs for Alzheimers and Some Other Dementias:

1. Memory loss for recent or new information, repeats self frequently
2. Difficulty doing familiar but difficult tasks: managing money, medications, driving
3. Problems with word finding, mis-naming, or misunderstanding
4. Getting confused about time or place, getting lost while driving, missing several appointments
5. Worsening judgment, not thinking thing through like before
6. Difficulty problem-solving or reasoning
7. Misplacing things or putting them in 'odd' places
8. Changes in mood or behavior
9. Changes in typical personality
10. Loss of initiation: withdraws from normal patterns of activities and interests

As part of the disease people with dementia tend to develop typical patterns of speech, behavior, and routines.

These people will also have skills and abilities that are lost while others are retained or preserved.

The GEMS® Progression of Dementia:

Sapphires

Diamonds

Emeralds

Ambers

Rubies

Pearls



Why Use GEMS® States?

- **Uses familiar concepts to talk about a difficult subject**
- **Focuses on what is valued rather than on a number or amount of ‘decline’**
- **Like people, gems are precious and unique, with common characteristics**
- **Allow to us to get beyond the words ‘dementia’ and ‘Alzheimers’**
- **Opens the door to talking about changes**
- **Allow us to speak in a ‘code’ to protect dignity**

Sapphires:



- **Us on a good day**
- **Clear and true to ourselves**
- **May feel 'blue' over changes**
- **Can typically choose our behavior**
- **May have other health issues that affect behaviors**
- **Recognize life experiences, achievements and values**
- **Can follow written info and hold onto it**

Diamonds:



- Sharp, hard, rigid, inflexible, can cut
- Many facets, still often clear, can really shine
- Are usually either Joiners or Loners
- Can complete personal care in familiar place
- Usually can follow simple prompted schedules
- Misplace things and can't find them
- Resent takeover or bossiness
- Notice other people's misbehavior and mistakes
- Vary in lack of self-awareness
- Use old routines and habits
- Control important roles and territories, use refusals

Emeralds:



- Changing color
- Not as clear or sharp, more vague
- On the go, need to 'do'
- Flaws may be hidden
- Time traveling is common
- Are usually Doers or Supervisors
- Do what is seen, but miss what is not seen
- Must be in control, but not able to do it correctly
- Do tasks over and over, or not at all

Ambers:



- Amber Alert- Caution!
- Caught in a moment
- All about sensation and sensory tolerance, easily over or under stimulated
- May be private and quiet or public and noisy
- No safety awareness
- Ego-centric
- Lots of touching, handling, tasting, mouthing, manipulating
- Explorers, get into things, invade others' space
- Do what they like and avoid what they do not

Rubies:



- Hidden depths
- Major loss of fine motor finger and mouth skills, but can do gross motor skills like walking, rolling, rocking
- Comprehension and speech halted
- Wake-sleep patterns very disturbed
- Balance, coordination, and movement losses
- Eating and drinking patterns may change
- Tends toward movement unless asleep
- Follows gross demonstration and big gestures
- Limited visual awareness
- Major sensory changes

Pearls:



- Hidden in a shell: still, quiet, easily lost
- Beautiful and layered
- Spends much time asleep or unaware
- Unable to move, bed or chair bound, frequently fall forward or to side
- May cry out or mumble often, increases vocalizations with distress
- Can be difficult to calm, hard to connect
- Knows familiar from unfamiliar
- Primitive reflexes
- The end of the journey is near, multiple systems are failing
- Connections between the physical and sensory world are less strong but we are often the bridge



So What Is Needed for a Successful Journey?

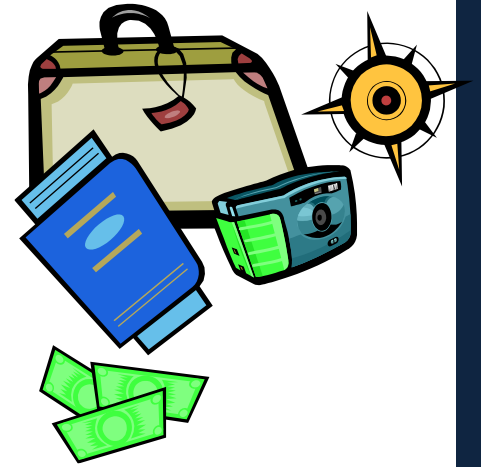


Believe:

**People with dementia
are doing
the best they can!**

Other Tips for the Journey:



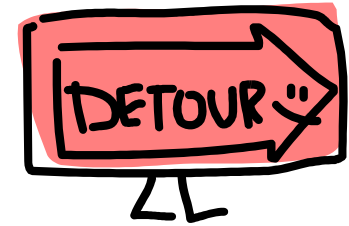


Keep Travel Logs:

Behavior Log

Medication Log

Doctor Visit Log



Unexpected and Sometimes Nasty Detours

Be ready for possible detours-
they will probably happen at some point!



Hospitalizations and Dementia:

Hospitalizations happen

Hospital stays are risky for those with dementia

Hospital stays are stressful to staff and family members

Standard communication and monitoring systems are frequently ineffective

What Can We Do to Help?

- **Have a hospital bag packed**
- **Build a team to share the load**
- **Consider your options**
- **Think about what is possible versus what makes sense**
- **Evaluate how it is going now**
- **Think about probable outcome**
- **Reconsider the situation**
- **Learn from the experience**

Advance Planning:

When advanced planning takes place in advance:

- There is greater satisfaction on the part of family and care providers**
- Quality of care is described as better**

When decisions are ‘forced’ by immediate circumstances:

- More dissatisfaction with decisions**
- Longer hospital stays, more procedures done**



Taking Care of Yourself!

**We All Need a Break,
Especially Care Partners!**



Why do we care about you?

- **Dementia caregiving is very hard work!**
- **Over 40% of the time we will lose a caregiver before we lose the person with dementia**
- **Your emotional state affects the person you are caring for**
- **You are just as important as the person with dementia!**

To Reduce Your Risk of Dementia:

- Lower your numbers: weight, blood pressure, 'bad' cholesterol, blood sugar
- Exercise several times weekly
- Avoid tobacco
- Eat whole grains, fish, fruits, vegetables, nuts
- Drink water
- Reduce stress
- Try new activities, experiences, and keep learning!

What is There to Laugh About?

- What the person says
- What the person does
- What the person says versus what is done
- Your mistakes and 'oops' moments
- Your moments of joy
- Your moments of insight
- Their moments of insight, awareness, or humor
- Other people and their behaviors or words
- Things you see, hear, read

A Few Ideas to Reduce Stress:

- Set aside just a few minutes for yourself – use a timer!**
- Breathe**
- Smile, laugh, look for some funnies**
- Remember a good time**
- Think about what you get out of the relationship**
- Use at least one of the Teepa's 10-Minute Stress Tamers**

Teepa's 10 Minute Stress Tamers:

- **Sit quietly** in calm surroundings with soft lights and pleasant scents.
- **Aromatherapy:** lavender, citrus, vanilla, cinnamon, peppermint, fresh cut grass.
- **Breathe deeply:** rest your mind and oxygenate
- **Soak:** in a warm bath, or just your hands or feet
- **Read:** spiritual readings, poetry, inspirational readings, or one chapter of a book you like
- **Laugh and smile:** watch classic comedians, Candid Camera, America's Funniest Home Videos, look at kid or animal photos
- **Stretch:** front to back, side to side, and across

Teepa's 10 Minute Stress Tamers:

- **Beanbag heat therapy:** fill a sock with dry beans and sew or tie closed, heat in a microwave for 30 seconds at a time, place on tight muscles and massage gently; relax for ten minutes
- **Remember the good times:** record oral memories, scrapbooks, photo journals, keepsake memory picture frames, or just jot
- Do a little on a favorite **hobby**
- Have a **cup of decaffeinated tea or coffee**
- Play a **brain game:** crosswords, jigsaws, jeopardy, jumbles
- Look through a **hymnal** and find a favorite and hum it all the way through
- **Garden:** work with plants

Teepa's 10 Minute Stress Tamers:

- **Books on Tape:** rest your eyes and read
- **Soothing sounds:** music you love, music especially for stress relief, recorded sounds of nature
- Listen to **coached relaxation recordings**
- **Pamper yourself** : think of what you love and give yourself permission to do it for 10 minutes
- **Neck rubs or back rubs:** use the 'just right' pressure
- **Hand Massages:** with lotion or without

Teepa's 10 Minute Stress Tamers:

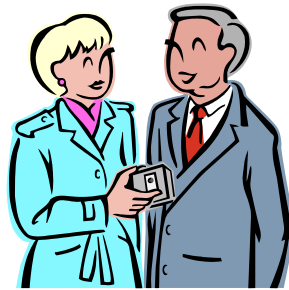
- **Take a walk**
- **Sit** in the sun
- **Rock** on the porch
- **Pray** or read a passage from scripture
- **Journal:** take the opportunity to “tell it like it is”
- Cuddle and stroke a **pet**
- Have that cup of coffee or tea with a **special friend** who listens well
- Pay attention to **your personality:**
 - If you rejuvenate being alone, then seek solitude
 - If you rejuvenate by being with others, seek company

Let Go:

How it 'used to be'

How it 'should be'

How you 'should be'



Being 'right' doesn't necessarily translate into a good outcome for both of you

It's the relationship that is most critical, not the outcome of one encounter

**It takes two to tango..or tangle
Learn how to dance with your partner!**

Final Suggestions:

- **Back off, change something and try again**
- **Adopt a 'So What' mentality**
- **Try a support group**
- **Accept yourself, and the person with dementia**
- **Look for the joy!!!**

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