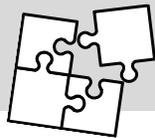


THE GUIDED LIGHT

January 2023 Edition

LA CROSSE COUNTY'S DEMENTIA NEWSLETTER FOR HOPE, SUPPORT, AND RESOURCES

Supporting Daily Activity & Engagement



What is daily engagement?

You may be wondering why engagement and activity are another daily task of the caregiving role for a loved one with dementia (read about that on the next page). Because amongst the long list of roles in caregiving, coordinating fun and recreation may seem exhausting. Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let's start by defining what we are talking about...

The dictionary defines engagement as "being engaged in activity, occupied, active and busy". If we explore that notion further and define activity as "the condition in which things are happening or being done" and "a leisure pursuit or pastime".

These definitions are important because they contradict the notion that you are responsible for recreation and games. While those are definitely important and an integral part of your loved one's at-home care plan, that is not the topic of this newsletter. What we will cover, is much more important and is something almost every one of us do without realizing: organizing ourselves to participate in meaningful daily life and initiating tasks to stay busy to fulfill a purpose. Your love one's 'busy' and 'occupied' is unique and will look different from another person's. Now that you know what we are talking about, you may already be recognizing some cues they've given you that what is going on isn't working (cues such as agitation, anger, sadness, wandering, or lethargy). Keep reading to learn ideas to start connecting with them better and reduce or minimize those symptoms!

Ask Others for Help!

A few ideas for who and what:

- A neighbor could be asked to come for a coffee chat
- A family member could be asked to run errands and shop (complete tasks for you OR take loved one)
- A volunteer could engage your loved one with the library activity kits available for check out
- In-home Respite providers can take your loved one out for walks, to an exercise or community groups or events (see senior life!)
- Take your loved one to OASIS Respite or an Adult Day Center for more than half a day of engagement and fun

You do not have to care give alone!

Why is it important to keep my loved one engaged?

We all want to have value and purpose; we all need to be needed in some way in order to want to stay alive and keep going. It turns out having value is so important that if your loved one doesn't have it, they'll find a way to create it in the only way they know how. Your loved one's desire to have purpose and value stems from them not wanting to be bored or a burden on you. Generally, behavioral symptoms like wandering, anger, delusional fixations increase due to limited activity engagement or perhaps the engagement they have is not appropriate (over or under stimulated). Your loved one will try to do what they know how to do and what they like but may not have all the skills to do it or complete it in the way one would expect. This ends up leaving caregivers stressed, confused and surprised. Keeping a person with dementia engaged not only benefits the person, but it significantly can help the caregiver!

Benefits for your loved one of participating in activity:

- improves quality of life (boosts the 'feel good' emotions)
- reduces behavioral symptoms (such as agitation, wandering)
- provides a sense of accomplishment, purpose, and usefulness
- enhances their sense of dignity and self-esteem
- provides a sense of normalcy and assurance

Selecting & Planning Activities:



1. Make It Personal

- Choose activities that incorporate their interests, preferred chores, or past roles.
- Sensory experiences can help relaxation and enjoyment.

2. Plan & Setup

- Organize and order activities
- Keep activities out and accessible
- Minimize distractions and reduce the decisions they have to make.

3. Make It Easier

- Break activity into steps, allowing them to do portions of the task
- Support participation that work best for them, even if it is not the typical way of doing things or produces a final 'product'

How to make the activities offered meaningful?



Consider:

1. Past, Present, and New Interests
2. Ask yourself how you can make them feel valued? Give them something 'important'
 - a. Ask for their opinion
 - b. Ask to look at something for you
 - c. Ask to help or take care of something
3. Match activity with abilities, don't over ask but be cautious not to don't under stretch
4. Be sure to check in with yourself: Can I manage this, or do I need help with others, maybe there is someone else that could be the partner in that meaningful activity

For more information on activity engagement, check out [Trualta online](#)! Sign up for a free account or call the ADRC 608-785-5700 to receive your own link to join.

You can learn more on topics such as: Matching abilities to activity, how to make a busy box, sensory activity ideas and how to turn everyday daily living skills into activity--- and more!

<https://wisconsincaregiver.trualta.com/login>

Ways to introduce engagement activity to your loved one...

Limited ability to initiate and low motivation are two common symptoms of dementia that impact our loved one's ability to participate. It's important to consider how activity is introduced:

1. Determine if this activity is new or something they think they already know how to do. "Let me show you..." allows for you to gauge, what do they understand?
2. Anticipate the steps and prepare those items/tasks by setting them up ahead of time - have all items in front of your loved one
3. Initiate for them, ask for help! "Could you put these pieces together?" or "These got mixed up, would you help me by..."
4. Participate along with them until they begin, hand over hand assist as needed.

UPCOMING SUPPORT & EDUCATION

January - February - March 2023

MONDAYS

Coffee Connect Support – All Stage Caregiver only 608-386-0767. Mondays, 10am via Zoom
EXPAND Program -Early-stage/MCI 608-785-5072

Twice weekly Mondays & Wednesdays. 2 hours
Club Connectivity - Early diagnosis/MCI & Caregivers 608-519-2088
Last Monday/month outing, 11:00am-2:30pm

TUESDAYS

Caregiver Support Group – All Stages Caregiver 608-386-8908. Tuesdays 1:15-3:00pm Good Shepard La Crosse
ALS Care Connections Support Group – All Stages 608-461-2905. 1st Tuesday/Month 4-5:30pm @ Community Connections Center

WEDNESDAYS

Winona SPARK! PWD&Caregiver 507-474-6626
1st Wednesday Monthly, 10:30am-NOON
Connect Smart PWD&Caregiver 608-519-2088
2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 12:30pm-2pm
·SPARK! at Clearwater Farm Onalaska
3rd Wed/Month, 10:30am-NOON 608-385-4819
Parkinson's Disease Support Group
Wednesdays/Monthly 2-4:00pm 608-519-2088
Grief Education Workshop
@Community Connections 608-519-2088
Jan 11, Feb 8, Mar 8, April 12 at 10-11:30am

THURSDAYS

OASIS Day Respite 608-780-0471 *Register
Weekly Thursdays, 11-3pm
Dementia Friendly Coalition – 608-386-0767
Monthly, virtual and in-person
Music Café
@Community Connections 608-519-2088
Thursdays 12:30-2pm; Feb 2-Mar 9

FRIDAYS

Giving Hearts Choir – All Stages, Caregivers, Friends. Call Ruth 608-792-8608
Weekly Rehearsals Fridays 10am,
North Presbyterian La Crosse

OTHER PROGRAMS-

Brain & Body Fitness – Early Stages/MCI PWD 608-386-0767, Call for scheduled dates/times
Caregiver Education Hour – 608-785-5700
Emergency Planning - Wed. Mar 1, 3-4pm and Mon. April 3, 9-10am
Powerful Tools for Caregivers – 608-785-5700
Virtual- Tuesdays 6-:30pm Jan 17-Feb 21
In-Person: Black River Beach, Thursdays Jan 12-Feb 16, 3-4:30pm
Alzheimer's Association Education- 800-272-3900
variety of topics
Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance Education- 608-723-4288 variety of topics
La Crosse Senior Life- 608-785-5700
Monthly activities in the coulee region



Check out other opportunities on the ADRC website:

<https://www.lacrossecounty.org/adrc/calendar.asp?View=MonthlyView&AppID=3>

Sign up for a copy of this newsletter: 608-785-5700