

Adult Day Caregiver Connection



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Purposeful Activities:

No matter the activity you do with your loved one, giving them a sense of purpose can make a big difference in their lives.

The four categories of purposeful activities:

1. Productive
2. Leisure
3. Self-Care
4. Rest/Restoration

PRODUCTIVE:

Day-to-day activities:

1. Fold towels or napkins
2. Pair socks
3. Set the table
5. Make the bed
6. Sweep the floor
7. Prepare parts of breakfast, lunch, or dinner
8. Wash and/or dry the dishes
9. Organize silverware

Come to the kitchen or any activity as prepared as possible. Below is an example of a kitchen task and how to work through it with your loved one.

Preplan a structured approach, with ingredients lined up and ready and step-by-step instructions provided. This will help ensure a more seamless and enjoyable experience.

Don't overcomplicate it. Use uncomplicated recipes with familiar ingredients to promote a feeling of accomplishment. If the person has a box of recipes or favorite cookbook, this is an excellent place to start. Pull out several recipe options (but not too many) that would be simple to prepare.

Stay social. The idea is to make the activity an occasion of togetherness where laughter is shared, stories are exchanged, and bonds are strengthened.

Make it personal. Consider the preferences and capabilities of the individual. Activities such as kneading dough, rolling out cookies, or tossing a salad can be empowering, confidence-boosting, and reinforce a sense of purpose.

Helping around the house: This can be as simple as stating, "I've made a little mistake and need some help. Will you help me?" Ask your loved one to help with folding laundry or towels, drying dishes, matching socks, etc. These small tasks have many benefits including improved self-esteem and sense of purpose.

Organizing fun: Pick a room in your house that needs some TLC and involve your person with tasks like organizing CDs, emptying drawers, etc. Take a couple of hours to organize this space.

Flower arranging: Together or independently, ask your loved one to help create beautiful centerpieces. All you need is an assortment of artificial or real flowers with vases and/or jars.

Focus on your loved ones routines, habits, and skills as these are areas that an individual with Dementia retains for a longer period of time.

Focus on how it makes your loved one feel rather than the perfection of the completed task.

LEISURE:

There are two types of leisure activities, passive and active. Watching something vs. engaging in the activity.

Seeing through the

photographs: Take an hour or so to pull out old photo albums or family videos. Watch and reminisce together. You might also want to listen or even dance to old favorite songs.

Social Groups: Get your loved one involved in social groups or activities with their topics of interest. They will feel a sense of community and purpose, having knowledge to share. Socializing is a great way to exercise the brain.

SELF CARE:

As Alzheimer's and other dementias progress, the world is largely experienced through the senses. You can listen to music together, go for a walk, play an instrument, offer a massage, or brush your loved one's hair.

This activity is so versatile. It can be done inside or outside. You might choose to play soothing music or even light candles (battery-operated candles work too). And don't stereotype; all genders can enjoy and benefit from relaxing "beauty" treatment. To get started, all you need is an emery board, polish, and some lotion. Provide your loved one with a gentle hand massage using some lotion and file. If desired, you might paint their nails.

Taking care of your own body also includes physical exercise as well as mental exercises.

REST/RESTORATION:

"Recharging their batteries"

Sleep is only one way to recharge one's batteries. Some other ways one can rest and restore their body is: practicing breathing exercises, eating healthy, clearing your mind, getting fresh air, staying hydrated, and stretching.

Refocus: Pay attention to the immediate situation or activity. Notice if the activity seems to be triggering your loved one. If so, make a change, redirecting to a more peaceful and relaxing activity. If a conversation is upsetting either of you, change the direction. Acknowledge what your loved one said and then move to a different topic.

Benefits of Purposeful Activities

- Purposeful activities provide a sense of purpose and routine.
- It acknowledges the skills and life experiences of a person and provides an appropriate outlet for these strengths.
- Purposeful activities are an emotionally nurturing experience that increases self-esteem and helps the person to feel useful.
- It can be an opportunity for greater social contact for the person.
- It can help to maintain skills and independence, and in some cases improve

capacity to perform certain daily activities.

- It provides an individual with an opportunity for decision-making and choice.

Both the individual living with dementia and the caregiver need all four categories of purposeful activities.

Caring for a friend or family member with Alzheimer's disease can take a physical and emotional toll. But, you are not alone. In the United States, more than 15 million people provide unpaid care to over five million people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Whether you provide daily care, participate in the decision making, or simply care about a person with the disease—there's a lot to do and plenty to know. The Alzheimer's Association provides free resources, tools and support that can help guide your caregiving journey.

Here are several:

alz.org/care—The Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiver Center provides reliable information and easy access to helpful resources.

alz.org/training—Free online workshop: Living with Alzheimer's For Caregivers series.

alz.org/findus -Support groups, education programs, and more available in communities nationwide.

800.272.3900—24/7 Helpline: Available all day, every day.