A Montessori-Based Approach for Aging and Dementia

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Objectives

1. Identify the fundamental principles of a Montessori-based approach to dementia programming
2. List individualized activities that you can implement with individuals with Dementia and/or teach your staff to implement to reduce unwanted behaviors and improve engagement
3. Describe ways to modify the physical environment to support people with dementia

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Dementia

- Researchers predict an estimated 7.1 million American citizens over the age of 65 will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease (AD) by 2025, a 39% increase from the current number of 5.1 million (Alzheimer's Association, 2015)
- Health care programs have begun to reevaluate the efficiency of services and quality of care provided to older adults with dementia
- 'Helping persons reach their optimal level of fulfillment', 'enriching the lives of our residents', and 'promoting the well-being of older adults' can be found in most mission statements

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Barriers to Dementia Care

- Single greatest barrier is beliefs
- Concept of 'therapeutic nihilism' (Camp, 2006; Clark, 1995)
- Belief that persons with dementia cannot learn new things

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Montessori Background

- Maria Montessori -- early 1900s
- Individualized instruction designed to enhance practical life skills and sensory experiences (Montessori, 2014)
- Simplify tasks, provide immediate feedback, and promote individualized supervision and learning (Lillard, 2008)

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Montessori Approach

- Dr. Cameron Camp adapted the Montessori method to treat people with Alzheimer's
- Engages the senses and evokes positive emotions
- Stimulation of cognitive, social, functional skills
- Conducted one-on-one

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Benefits to Montessori Approach

- Increase social engagement (Judge et al., 2000; van der Ploeg et al., 2013)
- Enhance attention, affect, and decrease agitation (Judge et al., 2000; van der Ploeg et al., 2013; Vance & Johns, 2003)
- Decreased problem behaviors (Giroux, Robichaud, & Paradis, 2010)
- Improved self-feeding (Sheppard, McArthur, & Hitzig, 2016)
- Sensory and cognitive stimulation (Camp & Mattern, 1999)
- Improved work satisfaction at work and reduced staff turn-over (De Witt-Hoblit et al., 2016; Roberts et al., 2015)

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Montessori with Late Stage Dementia

- Increased active engagement, pleasurable affect, less anxiety (Orsulic-Jeras & Judge, 2000)
- Increased engagement and carryover of functional tasks (Camp & Skrajner, 2004)
- Improved ADL (e.g., eating) (Lin, Huang, Watson, Wu, & Lee 2011)
- Reduced behaviors (De Witt-Hoblit, Miller, & Camp, 2016; Lin et al., 2009; Roberts, Morley, Walters, Malta, & Doyle, 2015)
- Improved language (Van der Ploeg et al., 2013)

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Montessori Overview

- Emphasis on:
  - Independence
  - Freedom within limits
  - Respect for a person's natural development
- Simple activities that provide a sense of accomplishment and connection with personal history

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Alignment with Person-Centered Care

- Montessori activities align with person-centered care
- Emphasize:
  - Respect
  - Dignity
  - Independence
- Provide more structure, individualized attention (smaller groups), opportunities for interaction, adequate sensory and cognitive stimulation vs. traditional LTC activities

(Camp & Mattern, 1999; Judge et al., 2000; Orsulic-Jeras, Schneider, Camp, Nicholson, & Helbig, 2001; Giroux et al., 2010; Orsulic-Jeras et al., 2000; Volicer, Simard, Heartquist Pupa, Medrek, & Riordan, 2006)

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The Basics …

- Use Everyday Materials
- Match Interests & Skills (group/individual)
- Use Past Experiences & Preferences
- Adapt According to Cognitive & Physical Status
- Simplify as Much as Necessary

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Assessment of History/Background

- What do they like to do?
- What is their history?
- Strengths and limitations?
- Environment -- what contributes to successful engagement and what hinders it?
- Relevant life experiences, values, interests?

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The Basics …

- Match Speed to Ability
- Progress from Simple to Complex
- Demonstrate
- Encourage & Assist
- Evaluate

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Activity Requirements

- Gross motor
- Repetitive
- Uses familiar motions
- Involves 1 or 2 steps
- Observable effect on the environment
- Non-competitive
- Involves few or no rules

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Considerations When Adapting Activities (Warchol, Copeland, & Ebell, 2002)

- Attention span
- Environmental scanning
- Awareness of purpose/goal
- Communication
- Physical attributes
- Quality of work
- Problem solving
- Sequencing
- Social factors
- Environment
- Ability to initiate
- Ability to choose
- New learning ability
- Direction following
- Response time

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The Basics …

- Structure
- Immediate feedback
- High probability of success
- Repetition
- External cues
- Procedural/nondeclarative/implicit memory

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The Basics …

- Self-Correcting activities
- Social participation
- Tailored to the individual, most delivered in groups
- Integrated into every facet of daily activities
- Right to refuse
- Modify for success
- Guided/structured repetition

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Creating Activities

Step 1
- Question why the person living with dementia is behaving in certain ways or demonstrating behaviors

(Elliot, 2011)

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Creating Activities

Step 2: CREATE
- C: Consider needs, interests, skills, abilities
- R: Remove clutter
- E: Error-free
- A: All materials are modifiable
- T: Templates to support declarative memory
- E: Evaluate the activity

(Elliot, 2011)

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Creating Activities

Step 3: PRESENT
- P: Prepare the environment
- R: Room set up
- E: Extend an invitation
- S: Show the activity
- E: Error-free
- N: Needs, interests, skills, abilities (modification)
- T: Thank you

(Elliot, 2011)

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Meaningful Activity

Every activity must . . .
- Have a purpose that is obvious to the participant
- Be voluntary
- Be pleasurable
- Be socially and age appropriate
- Be failure proof

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Montessori Approach

- Every participant should have an activity that he/she can successfully handle
- If materials are used inappropriately, but engagement is strong, let the activity occur
- Provide demonstration as needed
  - Matching Shapes/Colors
  - Color Sorting
  - Picture Puzzle
  - Pairing & Sorting
  - Sensory Boxes

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Montessori Approach

- Cognitive Skills
- Life Skills
- Movement
- Sensory
- Music
- Art
- Socialization

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Activities by Stage

- Early stage of dementia
  - Activities that focus on the whole task
- Mid-stage of dementia
  - Activities that focus on the individual steps of the activity
- Late stages of dementia
  - Activities that focus on the sensory part of the activity

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Montessori Approach

- Issue that may occur
- Lose focus
- Walk out
- Lose interest
- Place small objects in their mouths

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Sensory Kits

- Offer an opportunity to stimulate as many senses as possible, for example:
  - Balls box
  - Cereal Box
  - Kinetic Sand
  - Seeds
  - Food

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Activity Kits

- Five domains of function
  1. Cognitive stimulation
  2. Life skills
  3. Motor movement and fitness
  4. Sensory stimulation
  5. Socialization

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Tailored Activity Programs/Kits

- Tailored Activity Programs reduce behaviors and increase engagement (Gitlin et al., 2008)
- Activity kits improve quality of visits and QOL (Crispi & Heitner, 2004)
- Individualized and meaningful activities show positive results (Pool, 2001)

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Activity Ideas

- Golf ball scoop
- Living/non-living or Happy/not-happy
- Memory BINGO
- Cognitive stimulation
- Life skills
- Sensory stimulation
- Templates
- Job boards
- Intergenerational

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