



THE BENEFITS OF FIDGET TOYS

As Alzheimer's disease progresses, individuals may become restless or develop fidgeting behaviors. Fidget toys or twiddle muffs may be a beneficial technique to calm a person or give them something to do with their hands in some instances.



The SenSupport Program was made possible by Nova Scotia Continuing Care Innovation Pilot funds.

Ask about all of the SenSupport brochures.

- Puzzles & Games
- Doll Therapy
- Fidget Toys
- Reminiscence Therapy
- Robotic Pets



SENSUPPORT Loan Program

FIDGET TOYS



Why Fidget Toys?

Sensory input levels impact everyone, not just people with dementia. When you are bored, you are under-stimulated. It helps if you have something external to meet your sensory needs, like calling a friend or turning on the TV.

People with dementia still notice when their environment doesn't match their sensory needs, but they might not be able to fix the mismatch independently.

Fidget toys are usually a large variety of bright colours and interesting textures. Touching, feeling, and moving the fidget toy provides a source of sensory input.

It is also a 'gentle' sensory experience. A person with dementia might not realize that background noise is something they don't need to pay attention to, and having something to focus on instead can be very relaxing.

Soothing sensory input

A fidget toy is usually calming. It is usually a passive activity, meaning they may not pay a lot of direct attention to it. So, a person looking out the window while running their fingers over the fidget toy is getting the same benefit as a person examining it closely.

A Note on Overstimulation

Background noise like the TV or radio can help with understimulation, but have the potential to become overwhelming. This is especially true of people who are losing language abilities.

Fidget toys are a good choice of therapy tool because the person with dementia is in control. When using the TV or radio, they might not be able to adjust the volume or program on their own or even ask you for help.

Check-in every hour and see how the person is doing when you have background noise on. If the person seems anxious, agitated, or withdrawn, see if a break from the noise improves their mood!



Signs of Success

Less sensory-seeking behaviour

A fidget toy usually helps reduce "sensory seeking" behaviours of people with dementia. These include wandering, rummaging through cupboards, or shouting repeatedly.

All of these behaviours can be attempts of the person with dementia to reduce boredom, and a fidget toy can meet their sensory needs differently.

If a person sometimes undresses themselves during the day, this can also signify they are a good candidate for a fidget toy. This behaviour often occurs because the person enjoys the texture of the buttons, zippers, and fabric, and they remove their clothing by mistake.

Because this can be a calming activity. A good time to use it is when a person is stressed. If a person lashes out when you brush their hair, see if holding their fidget toy changes their reaction.

