



AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INSIGHTS

Trying different kinds of games and puzzles can provide you with a clearer picture of how exactly a person's dementia is affecting their abilities. You can use this information to tailor your approach to caregiving.

For example, if you notice a person has trouble with word games, it might be a sign to start using lots of visual cues and actions might. If they struggle guessing what comes next in a sequence, it might be a clue that they need step-by-step directions or supervision with tasks.



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

PUZZLES & GAMES



Fun Activities - With Lots of Benefits!

Games and puzzles are great activities for people with dementia. Different kinds of activities use different types of cognitive skills. For a person with dementia, using these skills often is very important. Putting the brain through this mental workout can help preserve abilities for as long as possible. While all these benefits are great, keep in mind that the goal should always be the enjoyment of the person using it.

Types of Games and Puzzles

The games and puzzles below are designed to be dementia-friendly and are intended to encourage the individual to use specific cognitive skills, such as:

Spatial Reasoning & Problem Solving

- Dementia-Friendly Puzzles — Use the included “map” to guide completion of these 13-piece puzzles, or try it without for an extra challenge.
- Lacing Activity Cards — A great option for someone who loves to sew. Stitch around the edges of the cards to add a little flair.

Short-Term Memory

- Easy Grip Matching Game — Match the beginning and end of famous phrases, song lyrics, and more. Use this activity like a sorting puzzle or simply read the phrases aloud.
- Memory Training Game — A multiple-choice picture matching game. Study the picture on the first page, and try to find the same image on the next page.



Logic, Reasoning & Making Predictions

- Sequencing Game — Predict what comes next in a series of unique puzzles. The book is ordered from easiest to hardest to make it easy to choose an appropriate challenge.

How Challenging is Too Challenging?

It's okay to have mixed emotions.

Caregivers might find it hard to watch a person with dementia, work hard to solve puzzles that would have once been easy for them. You might wonder if working on cognitive skills that no longer come naturally to them is fair or ethical.

Remember that most people seek out challenges in their everyday lives. Think of the satisfaction you get from completing a difficult project at work, or from making a complicated but delicious recipe.

Giving a challenge to a person with dementia is an act of dignity, an opportunity for them to use their abilities to the fullest. It also gives them the chance to provide themselves with the feelings of pride and satisfaction that are so important to everyone's wellbeing.

Signs of Success

Matching ability to challenge.

Activities tend to be the most fun and interesting when our abilities match the challenge. For example, skiing down a challenging mountain would be a lot of fun for an expert, but very scary and frustrating for a beginner.

Games and puzzles can be very challenging for someone with dementia, so it is important to watch for signs of frustration. Try doing the activities along with the person with dementia. Be patient and let them try, but don't be afraid to give hints or help.

If an activity is so easy that a person completes it immediately, or so hard that they can't do it without getting frustrated, it's best to move on and try something different. If the activity is a good match, be sure to celebrate when they succeed!

