



THE BENEFITS OF REMINISCENCE THERAPY

Reminiscence therapy, used to help encourage past memories is a wonderful form of connection for those with dementia and their loved ones. Favorite songs, photographs, and meaningful objects can help unlock feelings, emotions and memories, and are strong bonds to the individual's personal history.



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

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- Reminiscence Therapy
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SENSUPPORT Loan Program

REMINISCENCE THERAPY



What is Reminiscence Therapy

Reminiscence is simply the act of remembering. When we help someone remember things that bring back positive emotions; it can have therapeutic benefits like reduced anxiety and depression.

Reminiscence therapy works well for dementia because it affects the most recent memories first. This includes memories like what they had for breakfast, or the name of their two-year-old grandchild.

Older memories, such as events that took place in their childhood, teens, and twenties tend to last much longer into the dementia process. Remembering is still harder for a person with dementia. The “Call To Mind Conversation Game” uses questions, prompts, and cues to make bringing back memories easy for caregivers to do.



Focus on the Positives

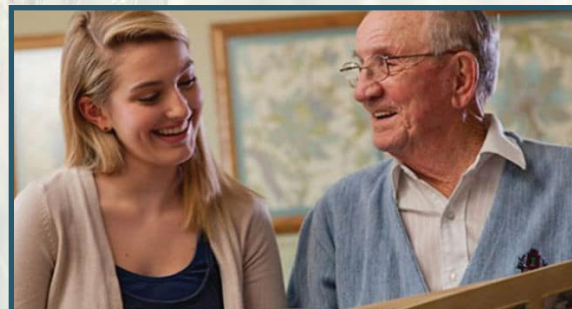
With a lifetime of experiences, a person with dementia might have gone through their share of hard times. Knowing any topics the person might find difficult is very helpful. For example, some veterans will be happy to share stories of their military service, while others prefer not to talk about it.

A note on ‘confabulation’

Some people with dementia tell elaborate stories about themselves or others to try and ‘connect the dots’ of things they don’t remember completely. One prevalent example is a person misplacing an object, then accusing their caregiver of stealing it.

Confabulation can seem shocking at first, especially in a more extreme form. Some people tell very detailed stories about travel to places they have never been or the ins and outs of an industry they have never worked in.

A person who confabulates is not lying to try to mislead you. Gently correct them if you’d like, but don’t take it personally.



Taking it Further

Get Creative With Cues

You might notice a lot of dementia products feature old-fashioned images, like vintage cars or clothing. These are more recognizable to someone whose older memories are more vivid than recent ones.

If your loved one responds well to reminiscence therapy techniques like the “Call To Mind Game,” you can try and find more memory cues on your own.

Look online or through old magazines for images from a time period when the person was young. These pictures can be of anything, food, furniture, clothing, hairstyles, architecture, or household items. Dust off some old records, or find old songs online.



Helpful Hints

Show Appreciation

The appreciation you show can help a person with dementia feel valued and maximize the therapeutic benefits. Ask for more detail. Write down their stories. Thank them for sharing their wisdom with you.