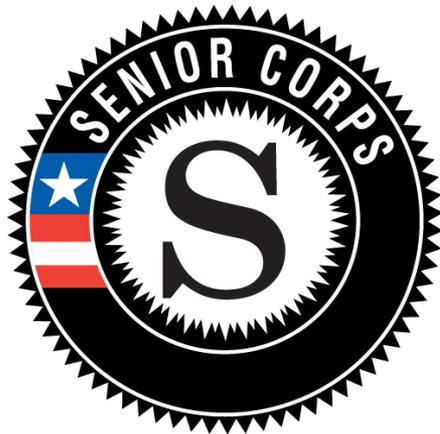


*Providing Independent  
Living Support:  
Understanding Dementia*



Trainer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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*By the end of the session, participants will increase their understanding of:*

- Causes, types, and warning signs of dementia
- What to expect from clients at different stages of dementia
- How to communicate with clients with dementia and choose activities

# DEMENTIA, COGNITIVE FUNCTION AND AGING

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## **True or False?**

1. *Forgetfulness is always a sign that something is wrong with your brain.*
2. *Everybody has different capacities for memory and these can change over a lifetime.*
3. *You lose 10,000 brain cells every day and eventually, you just run out.*
4. *Dementia is a normal part of aging.*

# WHAT IS "NORMAL"?

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*Everybody is different, but in general...*

- Creativity continues and wisdom accumulates.
- Information processing is slower (but repetition helps).
- “Multi-tasking” is more difficult.
- Long-term memory declines somewhat (but cues help).
- Much of our language abilities stay the same or improve.

Source: American Psychological Association

# DEMENTIA INVOLVES DECLINE IN CORE MENTAL FUNCTIONS

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1. Recent Memory
2. Language
3. Visuospatial Function
4. Executive Function



# WARNING SIGNS OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

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- Memory loss
- Difficulty in performing familiar tasks
- Language problems
- Disorientation to time and place
- Poor or decreased judgment
- Problems with abstract thinking
- Misplacing things
- Changes in mood or behavior
- Changes in personality
- Loss of initiative

Source: Alzheimer's Association

# STAGES OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

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**Stage 1: No** cognitive impairment

**Stage 2: Very mild** cognitive decline

**Stage 3: Mild** cognitive decline

**Stage 4: Moderate** cognitive decline

**Stage 5: Moderately severe** cognitive decline

**Stage 6: Severe** cognitive decline

**Stage 7: Very severe** cognitive decline

Source: Alzheimer's Association

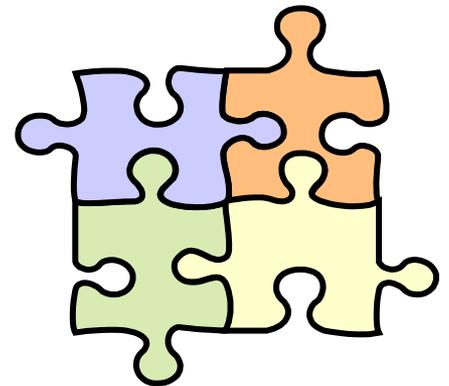
# EXERCISE: MATCHING GAME

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**Step 1. Split into small groups (teams of 3-4).**

**Step 2. Lay the objects from the bag on the table.**

**Step 3. Pair the like objects.**



# SERVING CLIENTS WITH DEMENTIA

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## **The person with dementia...**

- Is always right (from his/her point of view).
- Loses the ability to learn and record information.
- Does not need a reality check.
- Cannot control their behaviors.

# SERVING CLIENTS WITH DEMENTIA: COMMUNICATION

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- Use eye contact and face the person.
- Treat the person like an adult.
- Speak in clear, simple language.
- Praise and encourage often.
- Be willing to repeat and rephrase.
- Be a good listener.
- Remember: emotions speak louder than words.
- Be your normal, warm, outgoing self!

# SERVING CLIENTS WITH DEMENTIA: ACTIVITIES

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- Focus on enjoyment of the process, not accomplishing something.
- Keep current skills and abilities in mind.
- Watch for signs of agitation; be ready to move on.
- Minimize distractions.
- Break the activity down into small steps.
- Encourage self expression.

# MANAGING DISTURBING BEHAVIOR

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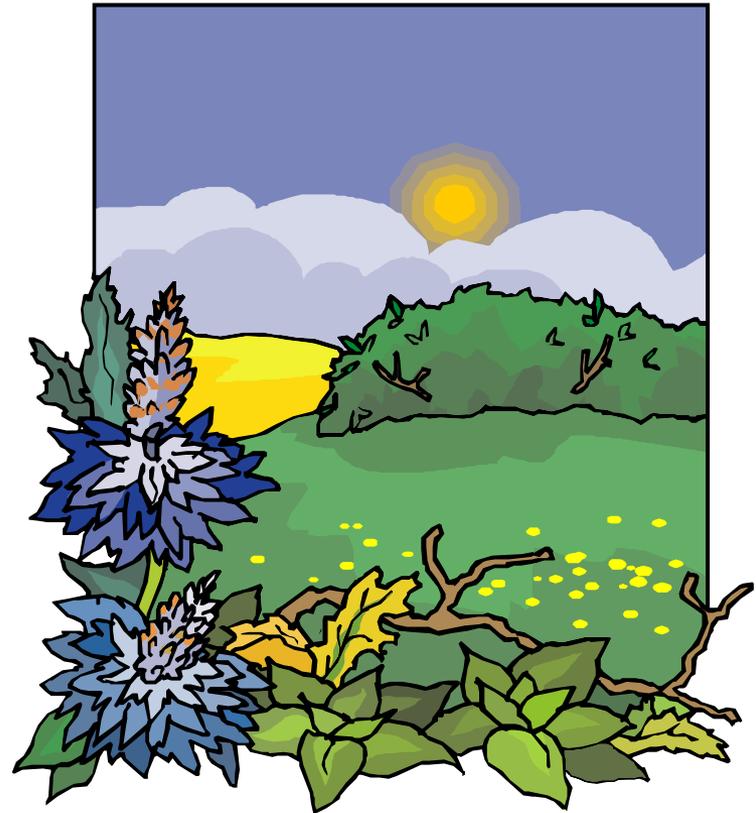
1. Distract or redirect.
2. Avoid arguing.
3. Bring the person back to a safe place.
4. Model correct behavior.

# REFLECTION: PREPARING FOR LOSS

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*Sometimes, when  
one person is  
missing, the whole  
world seems  
depopulated.*

*~Lamartine*



## LAST THOUGHTS...

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*“A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words.” ~unknown*

***You are appreciated!***

