The Importance of Social Connectedness

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FIRE

Objectives:

- Improved overall health and well-being with increased social connections.
- Find ways of bringing meaning and purpose to those living with dementia.
- Explore intergenerational programming as a way to form lasting relationships.
- Learn how to encourage and engage social interactions and community connections.

What is really important?

Creating a guide for care

One page profile

- **What do others admire about me?**
- **What is important to me?**
- **What is the best way to support me?**

(Helen Sanderson Associates)

Marian's profile

Quality of Life Domain

Eden Alternative Wellness Domains

- Meaning
- Growth
- Autonomy
- Security
- Joy
- Connectedness
- Identity

Meaning

Significant
Heart
Hope
Importance
Value
Purpose
Reflection
Sacredness

Growth

A person's development

Enrichment always unfolding

Expanding

Evolving

Autonomy

Liberty

Self-governance

Self-determination

Having immunity from the arbitrary exercise of authority

Choice

Freedom

Joy

Happiness

Pleasure

Delight

Contentment

Enjoyment

Security

Freedom from doubt

Anxiety

Fear

Feeling safe

Certain

Assured

Having privacy

Dignity and respect

Identity

Being well-known

Having personhood

Individuality

Wholeness

and a History

Connectedness

A state of being connected

Alive

Belonging

Engaged

Involved

Not detached

Connected to the past, present and future

A connection to personal possessions, place and nature

Dr. Allen Power

- Dr. Allen Power asks two questions:

Who am I? & Why am I here?

Identity and **Connectedness**….. are the foundation for creating well-being.

Two of the seven Eden Alternative Domains of Well-being

Who is the person for whom we care?
What is this place, and do I belong here?

Social Connections

- Improved relationships
- Improved physical health
- Improved mental wellness
- Increased life satisfaction & enjoyment
- Personal growth and development

The Primal Human Needs – A New Framework for Happiness – Mark Tyrrell

- to give and receive attention
- to heed the mind/body connection
- purpose, goals and meaning
- community and making a contribution
- challenge and creativity
- intimacy
- control
- status
- safety and security

Awareness of the Person

- - Identify strengths, weaknesses & accomplishments
- - Values as they relate to their culture, attitudes, religious beliefs and customs
- - Leisure & social preferences, interests, skills,
- hobbies etc.
- Barriers to preferred leisure/social lifestyle
- - Their goals – things that are important to them

Building the connection:

Develop individual approaches which:

- Sustain a sense of self identity/humanity
- Accommodate residents' needs / interests
- Maintain or increase functional ability
- Decrease learned-helplessness/promote autonomy
- Encourage growth & exploration
- Decrease barriers to leisure pursuits
- Promote feelings of security & connectedness

Being Alone

Loneliness harms aging health!

- AARP estimates 42.6 million adults age 45 and older are chronically lonely.
- "Loneliness and Isolation double the risk of Alzheimer's Disease." Dallas Jameson spokeswoman for National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
- AARP Campaign Connect2Affect
  - Research on loneliness and innovative attempts to address the issue

Factors for greater risk of loneliness:

- Living alone
- Mobility or sensory impairment
- Low income or limited financial resources
- Being a caregiver for someone with serious condition
- Psychological or cognitive challenges
- Inadequate social support
- Rural, unsafe and or inaccessible neighborhood
- Transportation access challenges
- Language barriers
- Age, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation and or gender identity barriers

Social Connections can improve overall health and well-being

Individualized ways to stay connected

- Who is the person in their lives that bringing the most joy?

- When do you see them engaged and connected?

Know the Person

"Relationships are
not only the heart
of long term care,
they are the heart of life."

Carter Catlett Williams

Connections to improve overall health and well-being

- Nurture relationships
- Schedule time
- Meet your neighbor
- Use media, write letters
- Group exercise
- Share interests
- Help others
- Spiritual engagement
- Find transportation
- Help civic groups

Living environment

Home alone

Care Partners

Assisted Living Community

Skilled Care Community

Opportunities:

- Share new ideas
- Promote healthy lifestyle choices
- Have open relationships with others
- Engaging conversations
- Offer opportunities with purpose

Opportunities:

- Make transportation accessible
- Provide diversity training – inclusion
- Integrated services
- Make a safe haven
- Find support in a faith communities
- Provide a reason to get up in the morning

Making Connections

Education is key:

- **Dispel Ageism**
- **Dementia Friendly Communities**
- **Youth involvement**
- **Empower care givers**

Value - Respect – Encourage – Empower

Share successes!

Make it Happen

Continually Celebrate Social Connectedness

Resources:

- AARP.org
- NCOA.org - National Council on Aging
- Pioneernetwork.org
- www.connect2affect.org
- Alz.org
- www.HealthinAging.org
  www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk
- A Profile of Social Connectedness in Older Adults
  - Academic Research Centers NORC @ the University of Chicago
  - Louise C. Hawkley Ph.D, Michael Kozloski, Ph.D, Jaclyn Wong. MA.

Changing the Culture of Care www.changingaging.org
G. Allen Power, M.D.

Thank you!

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