



3 Non-drug Approaches for Dementia Patients

The following article summarizes a recent blog post from the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal. The Portal provides trustworthy information on a range of topics related to healthy aging. To see the full post go to <http://tinyurl.com/optimal-aging-dementia>.

Dementia is a devastating disease. The characteristic behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia including agitation, aggression, wandering, resistance to care, delusions, hallucinations and repetitive speech, can be very upsetting for people with dementia as well as their loved ones.

How do caregivers cope with these challenging behaviours? Often, doctors prescribe medications including antipsychotics, antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs to help calm patients, but there are problems associated with drug use including side effects that can lead to serious health issues. Recent evidence recommends a shift in the way we manage challenging symptoms of dementia, valuing non-drug approaches that calm and reassure people as a first treatment step.

1. Person-centred care: Getting to know all about you. One of the most promising approaches

involves an individualized person-centred model of care in which a person's background, likes/dislikes, values, culture and abilities are taken into account to develop communication and care strategies that encourage positive responses and interactions. Person-centred care has also been shown to benefit caregivers by promoting greater job satisfaction and preventing burnout.

2. Sensory stimulation: The healing power of touch Various types of sensory stimulation, such as hand massage, can help improve behaviours and the general wellbeing of people with dementia.

3. Music to soothe and relax Relaxing music has been shown to promote cooperation during meal times. Listening to music of their choice while receiving one-on-one personal care – such as bathing – may also help improve behaviour among people with dementia who are more resistant to care.

From Berlin to Vienna: Romance, Renaissance and Revolution October 16 - November 1, 2017

Please join Graham Roebuck, Professor Emeritus, McMaster University and your fellow McMaster retirees as we explore the riches of Germany and Austria. The trip begins on October 16, 2017 in Berlin where we will spend two days touring the city and then embark on a six-day Viking river cruise on the Elbe River to Prague. After an additional two days visiting Prague, we will begin a seven-day land trip to explore the great historical and cultural landmarks of south Germany and Austria. Four nights will be spent in Augsburg before continuing on to Vienna for a further three nights, where the trip concludes on November 1. During both portions of the tour, Dr. Roebuck will speak informally about the sites we visit, with a particular emphasis on their literary and historical significance.

For more information, please contact Elizabeth McCallum at 905-540-8747 or email emccallum@cruiseshipcenters.com. For additional details, please refer to page 8 of the Fall 2016 MURAnews (mcmaster-retirees.ca/MURAnews.2016-17.html).