

# **FHCA 2014 Annual Conference & Trade Show**

## **CE Session #30 – Creating Meaningful Activities for Residents with Dementia**

Wednesday, July 9 – 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Canary 4 – Clinical/Care Practice

### **Upon completion of this presentation, the learner will be able to:**

- define what is meant by meaningful activities that are person-centered;
- list at least four reasons that developing a relationship with the resident matters;
- define what is meant by activities of the heart and spirit; and
- demonstrate at least three new ways to help resistant residents engage in meaningful activity.

### **Seminar Description:**

In this session, the presenter will offer some creative ways to create meaningful activities for residents with dementia that are person-centered with an emphasis on “activities of the heart and spirit.” Attendees will better understand how relationships with residents directly impact successful outcomes.

### **Presenter Bio(s):**

Nancy L. Kriseman, LCSW, has worked in elder care for over 30 years. She provides consultation to long term care organizations and has presented elder care workshops across the country. She is the author of *The Caring Spirit Approach to Eldercare*, Health Professions Press, 2005 and *The Mindful Caregiver*, Roman and Littlefield, Feb 2014.

***“Creating Meaningful Activities for  
Residents with Dementia”***

**Nancy L. Kriseman, L.C.S.W**

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**“We have to help people with  
dementia feel less dis-eased”**

**Nancy L. Kriseman L.C.S.W**  
**The Caring Spirit Approach to**  
**Eldercare**

## Re-thinking Dementia

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- We need to *re-frame* how we *think* about dementia
  - Often characterized by negative descriptors (by professionals, the media, families, book titles...)
- We need to as Ann Basting says, “Forget Memory”
  - We need to understand why we are so fearful of getting dementia
  - Understand what is meant by “identity threat”
  - Think about how we talk about our residents who have dementia

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**“Never take a persons dignity. It’s worth everything to them and nothing to you”**

**Author unknown**



## Re-thinking Dementia

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- We need to *re-examine* what is more important, the head or the heart
  - In today's fast paced, knowledge obsessive culture, what we know seems to be more important than how we feel
- We need to *re-consider* how we will support all those *living with* and *caring for* those with dementia
  - Research and the financing of AD and other dementia's needs to not just be on "a cure"
  - People with dementia deserve to live in a dignified manner with programs and services that support that!



## Re-thinking Dementia

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- We need to *re-conceptualize* the memory care environments we create
  - Our dementia care communities should ooze "warm fuzzy"
- We need to *re-invent* how we support and care for those with dementia
  - Our approach
  - Our programs and services
  - Our own resistance to changing how we deliver care and services

## Re-thinking Dementia

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- Lastly, we need to *re-visit our own perceptions of dementia*
  - We need to look at behavior challenges and resistance differently
  - We need to remind ourselves of the importance of helping create as much “ease” as possible for the person with dementia
  - We need to take another look at the “importance of reality” as we experience it and the elder experiences it
  - We need to be creative, “think out of the box”, inspire fun!

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**“We don’t remember days, we remember moments”**

**Cesare Pavese**

## **Dementia's Defining Moments**

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- Being more in the moment
- Less stress and worries
- Meeting new people every day
- Saying what you feel and being less guarded
- Every experience is a new experience
- Appreciating the simplicity that life can bring
- Re-establishing relationships

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**“The brain thinks, the heart remembers”**

**Nancy L. Kriseman**  
**The Caring Spirit Approach to**  
**Eldercare**



## **Recreating a Philosophy of Care**

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- Creating a “Caring Spirit” philosophy for meaningful activities
  - Requires adhering to a set of values that foster:
    - Compassion
    - Connecting to the spirit and heart of the resident
    - Creating quality relationships
    - Self-esteem and self-worth in our residents
    - And encourage meaningful moments for our residents
    - And encourage meaningful connections
    - Hope for our residents and their families
    - Joy for our residents and their families



## **Understanding How to Create Meaningful Activities**

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- First and foremost you must KNOW your residents. This helps:
  - The resident feel *cared about*
  - To create a relationship between you and the resident
  - Create activities that have meaning to the resident
  - You to create an activities calendar that reflects the interests of the residents
  - Encourages a *feeling of spirit* in the community

**“The basic need to continue being  
who I am, is perhaps the most  
important need of anyone”**

**Burger, Fraser, Hunt, Frank  
Nursing Homes, Getting Good Care  
There**

## **Challenges We Face with Residents with Dementia**

- Poor attention span
- Easily overwhelmed
- Difficulty with comprehension
- Difficulty with hand/eye coordination
- Personality
- Wide range of abilities among residents
- Communication issues





## **Understanding Why A Resident May Resist**

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- Resistance is:
  - A way to try to remain independent & in control
  - A symptom of feeling overwhelmed or frightened
  - Can occur when a person is unable to understand his situation because of dementia, depression or other psychological conditions
  - When a person is from a different culture
  - A form of denial
  - A way to not have to change



## **Why It's Important to Tap Into The Spirit and Heart of Residents with Dementia**

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- Residents with dementia tend to respond much better to the heart versus the head
- Residents who may be resistant have a much more difficult time resisting activities that tap into their hearts
- Activities of the spirit can help some of the behaviors of dementia such as; pacing, wandering, attention span, agitation
- Provides a positive way for our residents to connect with one another

## HENRY



<http://vimeo.com/41588306>

**“It is important to know what disease  
the person has, but it’s more important  
to know what person the disease has”**

**Dr. William Osler**



## **The Way We Communicate Matters**

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- Help the resident feel validated and listened to
- Remember it does not matter if we don't understand what the person is saying to us, it just needs to feel like we do
- Talk to the person like an adult, not a child
- Pay attention to non-verbal communication
- Consider out of the box ways to communicate



## **Activity Categories that Touch the Spirit & Heart**

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Creative- cooking, music, gardening, dance, crafts

Sensory Stimulation- massage, cooking smells, touching items that bring back memories

Spiritual- not only religious programming but programs that connect residents to nature, community, pets

Cultural- celebrating the residents heritage, rituals, birthplace

**“Home is not where you live but  
where they understand and care  
about you”**

**“Rethinking Alzheimer’s Care”**

### **Activity Categories that Touch the Spirit & Heart cont...**

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Social- activities that foster interaction  
such as; memory slips, dancing, etc.

ADL’s- nail care, makeup etc.

Life Skills- remembering the skills and  
tasks that residents performed in their  
day to day lives

Horticultural- bringing the outdoors,  
indoors, emphasizing the senses



## Re-Investing in Our Residents

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- Relationships Matter! (instead of Person Centered Care- “Relationship Centered Care”
  - Dementia can take away a persons cognitive abilities, but relationships can still be developed
  - Being “mindful” about how we create relationships with the resident
    - Collaborate- making a conscious choice to work with people in partnership
    - Be playful- creating joy, humor and fun inspires love
    - Celebrate- finding ways to celebrate the “little things”
    - Re-Membering- Finding ways to honor the residents past and remembering who she was!



## Re-Investing in Ourselves

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- We need to re-invest in ourselves
  - Caring for elders with dementia does take ENERGY and COMMITMENT
  - We need to find ways for us to enjoy working with our residents
  - We need to move away from always doing the same things the same ways
  - We need to carve out time in our department meetings to share our joys and blessings about our work
  - We need to celebrate ourselves!

## **“The heart remembers”**

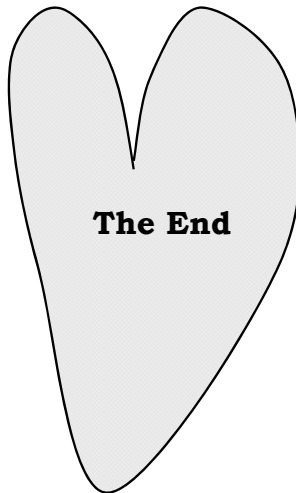
**Nancy Kriseman**  
**“The Caring Spirit”**

## **Why We Matter**

- Social workers are the *keepers of the soul*
- Activity therapists are the *keepers of the spirit*
- Both our professions help move quality of care to a more profound level-*quality of life care*

***“ If a man has two pennies, he should  
spend one to buy a loaf of bread to  
sustain life and with the other penny  
buy a flower to make a life worth  
living”***

**A Chinese proverb**





***For Additional Information***

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For information about "The Caring Spirit" visit:  
[www.healthpropress.com/store/kriseman-9063/index.htm](http://www.healthpropress.com/store/kriseman-9063/index.htm)