

MONTESSORI METHODS FOR DEMENTIA™

Montessori Methods for Dementia™ is a program that provides opportunities for older adults with dementia the means to interact positively in their environment and function at the highest possible level.

Who was Dr. Maria Montessori and how does her work apply to dementia?

Dr. Maria Montessori, born in 1870, was a physician, educator and humanitarian and the first woman to obtain a medical degree in Italy. She began her work at the University of Rome Psychiatric Clinic with special needs children and in 1907 opened the first Casa dei Bambini or House of Children. Her “method” developed from her scientific observations of children based on respect for the individual.

Maria Montessori, through her observations of children, discovered the importance of the Prepared Environment. It must be beautiful in its simplicity, orderly, accessible, provide freedom to work according to one’s needs, offer materials to explore the world and provide opportunities to interact socially. The result of offering a prepared environment leads the individual to be as independent as possible, have a meaningful place in society, have high self esteem and have a chance to make meaningful contributions to their community.

Some of her many contributions to the work of raising and educating children were:

- Preparing the most natural and life supporting environment for the child (Prepared Environment)
- Observing the child living freely in this environment
- Continually adapting the environment in order that the child may fulfill his greatest potential – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually

Following the primary principles of observation, individual liberty and preparation of the environment Montessori for Dementia integrates the ideology into programming for individuals with dementia. Activities are created and presented based on the needs, strengths, skills, abilities and interests of the individual. It provides them the opportunity to be engaged in life.

“How easily his helplessness can cause him mental anguish, and how much our understanding of his language can help us to save him from this, and calm his mind!”

Dr. Maria Montessori

What is Montessori Methods for Dementia™?

- Method to create and present activities based on models of learning and rehabilitation
- Combats invasive memory loss by focusing on spared capacity through procedural memory and environmental cues that build on existing abilities
- Procedures are implemented so individuals circumvent existing deficits and achieve a higher level of functioning

Why should Montessori Methods for Dementia™ be used?

- to enhance function
- to increase pleasure
- to improve family member visits/decrease family frustration
- to enhance conversational abilities
- to decrease responsive behaviours
- ***to enhance the quality of life and give the person a reason to get up in the morning***

What are the goals of Montessori Methods for Dementia™?

- To improve and maintain quality of life
- To prevent excess disability
- To provide meaningful activities and social roles
- To create people who are as independent as possible and able to make choices
- To create environments (whole facility, individual rooms etc.) that challenge but let individuals succeed
- To build on strengths and skills that have been retained
- To prevent and/or decrease behaviours
- Above all to provide an environment where the person is treated with the utmost respect

Programming enables people to interact positively in their environment and function at the highest possible level.

Who can use Montessori Methods for Dementia™?

- **Anyone who has been trained.**
 - Professionals – OT, PT, PSW's, R.N.'s, Recreation
 - Paraprofessionals
 - Volunteers
 - Family

Where can you use Montessori Methods for Dementia™?

- **Anywhere**
 - LTC
 - Day Programs
 - Assisted Living
 - At home
 - Hospitals



“Help me to do it myself”
Dr. Maria Montessori