

Visiting a person with dementia

Is not always easy. What to say? What to do? But when you turn your visit into an active visit. The visit will become more pleasant for you and for the person with dementia.

With an active visit you also support the nursing whereby the care for your family member run easier & better, resulting in more wellbeing.

What can you do?

- Tracking down the music which bring rest, happiness & conversation piece
- Finding photo's which becoming beacons for the person with dementia
- Participating in activities giving self-confidence & joy to the person with dementia
- Providing information about hobbies, habits, activities

What you can give to a person with dementia

- Feelings of home & safety
- Handholds in the dementia fog
- Rest in the chaotic brain with dementia
- Joy, happiness and activating memories

Results:

- Your visits becoming more pleasant with more contact
- Lesser unrest and lesser problem behaviour
- Care operations runs Better & Easier



Empathic feelings grow stronger

It's important to know that the empathic feelings of a person with dementia grow stronger as the dementia fog becomes thicker and thicker. So a person with dementia becomes more and more sensitive for your feelings and for the ambient atmosphere.

The smile from your heart

Your love and your smile from the heart will be felt by the person with dementia. Always, even when the person is not able to communicate, your presence is be felt.

Therefore can people with dementia rise above themselves in a ambience where the feel that the may make mistakes, that they may forget, that they are accepted as they are. In this ambience people with dementia can surprise you what the still can do.

You could participate or setting up activities as:

- Painting - sculpture- drawing - folding - writing poetry etc...
- Singing - acting - dancing - gardening - backing etc...
- Physical exercising with balloons, conducting, mirroring on music etc...

Big boost

The family participating gives equality feelings and a boost to the self-confidence of the person with dementia. "Look I am singing together with my partner or son in a choir this is great" and being active provides more contact with a person with dementia then sitting on a table.



[Introductie movie of Ignar's dementia Guide "One Rule them all"](#)

[Why you are important - movie](#)

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Active with the power of music

Why music? Because one music stimuli activates 17 trillion brain cells which activating and connecting the different brain parts with each other.

Those connections are very important because you can say, we are our connections. For everything we do thousands of connections must be made in our brain. And when through dementia, connections are not made easily you help the brain enormously by playing music. You could say: Music creates a brain bypass by a brain roadblock!

The benefits for the persons with dementia:

- Feelings of safety, home, cosiness - Shelter
- Rest in the chaotic brain with dementia
- Orientation, handholds, memories
- Joy & Happiness

The benefits for family and carers:

- Lesser unrest and lesser problem behaviour
- All care operations runs Better & Easier
- Contact & Conversation piece



How to realize this?

Find the right music and divide these over the Care Oriented Playlists.

The Care Oriented playlists

By dividing the founded music over The Care Oriented playlists the nursing can easily integrate the music into the daily care.

How to find the right music?

By making use of The Musical Discovery list & The 15-25 Rule

The Musical Discovery list

Is a questionnaire with which you can track down the personal favourite music of a person with dementia. At the end of this handout you find the The Musical Discovery list.

The 15-25 rule?

All the music we have heard between our 15 & 25 year are deeply rooted in our brain. So deeply that even dementia can't destroy these music memories. Hearing songs from the 15-25 period, memories will immediately pop up, opening whole worlds from that time. Try it yourself: Listen to a song from your own 15-25 period and look what happens.

15-25 songs are Tin Openers for the memory

So search & collect the songs which were popular during the 15-25 period of the person with dementia. these songs does not have to be someone's favourite music! The songs can be heard everywhere during his or her 15-25 period. At home, in school, on the radio in church, in the pub, during dancing lessons, at work. Let's walk through a music day starting in the morning.



[Why music - a movie](#)

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Waking-up music

I think we all once have woken up in a strange bed and for a split second not knowing where we were. But the next second you knew, I am in Spain, Greece or staying at aunt Bettie. But for people with dementia the next second does not have to come. What does come up are questions and feelings of fear. Where am I? What I am doing here?

Safety & Home

But when a person with dementia wakes up and his favourite music is playing, creating feelings of home and safety, there is no need for feelings of fear. Starting with someone's own Waking-up music is having lesser unrest and lesser problem behaviour in the morning.

Showering music

It's tested & proven that when people with dementia hearing music during care operations, they feel intuitively what their care worker wants or intends to achieve. With a good showering playlist the undressing, showering, washing and dressing up runs more pleasant with lesser stress, a happy start of the day!

Use it or lose it

Staying in movement is important, but not always fun to do. With music you make it easier and fun as rhythmical music brings our body automatically in motion. Think how often you are tapping your fingers on the rhythm of the music without thinking or knowing it.

It would be great if the Exercising playlist contains songs of the person 15-25 period and sing along. This makes the exercises fun and people will looking forward to it.

Remembering / Feel good music

A great playlist to use by the visitors for making contact or creating conversation piece. The songs are tin openers for the memory bringing joy and happiness to the one with dementia. It's also first aid music when a person with dementia is angry, violence, sad or becoming restless in the afternoon(sundowning)

The Bed time playlist

Listening to your own favourite "Bed time music" is a wonderful way to fall asleep. But "Bed time music" is not only important for bringing people to bed and for falling asleep.

When a person with dementia wakes up in the night, not knowing where he or she is. fear and questions are coming up: Where I am? What I am doing here? Please help me? But when a person with dementia wakes up in the night and his favourite music is softly playing, providing feelings of safety and home, there is no fear and unrest.

What is good "Bed time music"? Every music which gives rest, peace and tranquillity to a person with dementia. This could also be sounds of nature, sound of a driving t rain or a burning campfire. Let the person with dementia be your "sound guide".

Till the end

The brain functions responsible for recognizing & enjoying music will not be affected by the dementia. So people with dementia can find peace and pleasure through music till the very end.



[Music through the day - a movie](#)

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Not my home

When the dementia fogs makes your surrounding unrecognizable and when the dementia has relocated your home into the past, it's not strange you become restless and start asking and looking for your home.

This is a big problem in the dementia care which causes much stress, fear and unrest by the person with dementia and is also a psychological burden for family and nursing.

How can you help?

By putting furniture, photos and objects in the surrounding, which are recognized by the person with dementia becoming real beacons in the dementia fog.

The benefits:

- Home feeling
- Lesser fear, lesser anger & violence
- Lesser wandering and runaway urge

What to use?

Small furniture: chair - lamp - radio set etc..

Objects like: working/hobby/household tools

Photos of: parental home, working environment, beloved spots etc.....



How to find the right objects?

Go with the person with dementia to a thrift shop or a flea market. Observe which objects the person recognized, happy or enthusiastic made. Make photos of the objects or even better buy them.

The recognized objects giving you an indication of the period where to find objects which you can use to create a home feeling. When it not possible to go outside, use your phone or tablet as a flea market.

For example search in Google for "daily life in the 60's in the UK" select images, there you go, the digital flea market.

Finding the photos beacons

Walk with the person with dementia through his photo albums. Don't say, look there is aunt Betty, or that's a lovely picture of your husband. The person with dementia will follow you, saying yes yes.

But you don't know if the person with dementia really recognizes the photo. Let the person be your photo guide. Don't choose for the person.

Every photo, which makes the person with dementia feel good or happy, is a good photo! When you are sure you have the right photos. Print them, for example on canvas. And hang them on the wall.

Tools & Objects from the working years

Are there pictures of the job, the shop, or colleagues? If not, search on the Internet for a similar working environment. Look if you can put working tools in the room. Besides being a beacon,



[Finding the beacons - a movie](#)

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The One-pound story

After a training of my, a nurse saw an old typing machine on a flea market. Immediately she thought about Mrs. Peters, who had been a secretary. Without thinking she bought the old typing machine, for one Pound.



At the moment the nurse enters the room with the typing machine. Mrs Peters came alive, she greeted the typing machine as an old friend. In a world where most things were unrecognizable for Mrs. Peters, came a subject, which she recognized.

Mrs. Peters flourished and became more alive. The nursing had to get papers and carbon papers because Mrs. Peters wanted to work. The old typing machine was not only a beacon in the dementia fog for Mrs. Peters, it became also a day-filling activity. The costs? One pound!

Household beacons

Cleaning & Household objects could also become beacons, a daily activity and giving the feeling of being useful again. Think about:

- Needle & Thread plus a pile of clothing to repair
- Polishes & silver or copper to brush
- Dusters & Dusting

Hobby tools

What were the person's hobbies? For example: stamp collecting, painting, sculpture etc... Even when a person is not able to work with the tools anymore, they can give comfort just by being there. They be lighthouses in the dementia fog.

Music instruments

Musical skills are not affected by dementia. So when a person has played a music instrument he or she can often play that instrument in spite of the dementia. Has the person played an instrument? If so, put that instrument in the room and look what happens.

The transverse flute (mail from a daughter with a mother with dementia)

After your lecture I remember that my mother used to play transverse flute. Coming home I looked the flute up and took it along with my next visit.

My mother was sitting in the shared living room, I put the transverse flute in the box on the table near my mother and went away to get coffee. When I return to my mother's table I was totally amazed. My mother who normally doesn't like to do things, had opened the box, assembled the flute and was playing on it. She was beaming with pleasure and went totally up in music.

Thank you for pointing out to me that musical skills are not being affected by dementia, you made my mother and me very happy thank you .



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The Music Discovery List

Has the person a preference for a genre of music ?

- Classical - Opera - Operetta
- Country - Big Band - Jazz
- Religious - Foreign music
- Rock & Roll - Pop - Disco or Folk music

Is there a preference for a

- Singer - Band - Group
- Orchestra - Composer - Artist

Did the person listen to radio?

- Which radio station ?
- To which radio show ?
- Think about the “radio plays” from those days

Did the person sing in a choir? Which songs sang the choir ?

Are there recordings of this? If yes use these recordings or try to find choral music which sounds like these. When someone with alzheimer’s has sang in the past or still sings, encourage to continue this or to pick it up again.

Was there music in the childhood home ?

- What music was listened to ?
- Which songs were sang ?
- Did they play an instrument at home ?

Did the person play in a band or orchestra ? What kind of music did they play ?

Are there recordings of this? If yes, use these recordings or try to find similar music. While listening to that music try if the person wants to play that instrument again.

Has the person a preference for a musical instrument ?

Piano - violin - bagpipe - accordion - harmonica, etc

Did the person play a musical instrument ?

When someone with alzheimer’s play or has played an instrument, encourage this to continue or to pick it up again. Musical skills are very deeply rooted in the brain and remain available.

What was the first music the person has bought ?

Look between the old records, cassettes and cd’s

Has the person favourite movies or tv programs ?

Think about opening tunes and film music



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Has the person danced or taken dancing lessons in his youth ?

Yes? Then search for dance music from that time and try while listening to that music if the person likes to dance again. If so, you have an exercise that gives pleasure for two.

Are there songs in regional dialect which the person knows or likes?

or songs belonging to the person's hometown ?

Are there songs belonging to special events ?

Did the person sing during work, washing the dishes or under the shower ?

If so, find the lyrics from those songs and sing along.

Has the person danced or taken dancing lessons in his youth ?

Yes? Then search for dance music from that time and try while listening to that music if the person likes to dance again. If so, you have an exercise that gives pleasure for two.

Is there a favourite comedian or humourist ?

Religious music has often a special value for someone with alzheimer's

even if it's long ago that the person has gone to church.

- Did the person go to church ?
- To which religious community ?
- Which music was played or sung there in the 15-25 period (see below)

Think about Christmas songs and other festival songs

These songs are deeply stored in the brain.

Why the 15-25 period ?

Because it is proven that the music heard between the ages of 15-25 is the most deeply rooted music in our brain. These songs can serve as keys for unlocking whole worlds of long forgotten memories.

Calculate the 15-25 period

The year of birth.....

Add 10 years to the year of birth.....

Add 25 years to the year of birth.....

The 15-25 period is between the two dates

Search for songs which were popular in this period



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