

DementiAbility Methods



The DementiAbility Methods™ focus on creating environments that support the needs, interests, skills/strengths and abilities of individuals living with dementia and other forms of cognitive impairment. A relationship/person-centred focus of care places emphasis on individuals and processes, rather than tasks, in an environment where organizations/staff/families/volunteers work as a team with the goal of enhancing function and enriching lives by engaging people in a world with meaning, purpose and joy in a prepared environment. The prepared environment provides memory and cognitive supports for finding places and things and for completing tasks successfully, while also providing opportunities to do things independently, fulfill roles, employ a schedule with daily routines, connect socially with others and enjoy leisure pursuits that are made available and accessible according to interests and abilities. The whole person is the focus, where needs, interests and abilities are connected to body, mind and spirit (social, cultural and spiritual).

How is this accomplished?

The How is in the WOW. The WOW formula is used with your best detective skills.

- **Who is this person (past and present)?**
- **Observations – What do you see? Why the behaviour? When is it happening & when is it not happening?**
- **What are you going to do? Consider finding locations, finding things, task breakdown, roles, routines (with an agenda), social connections & activities**

CREATE a Prepared Environment

Create a prepared environment. The WOW Model guides thinking, based on needs, interests, skills and abilities (NISA). The aim is to create a familiar environment (with the look, feel and smells of home) that enables abilities, supports independence, fosters a sense of belonging, affords dignified living, offers choice and adds meaning, purpose and joy to each day.

- Complete the WOW, Needs, Interests, Abilities and Participant Profile forms. These details guide decision-making. The organization, staff and team work together to support each person in a prepared environment. Declarative and procedural memory guides thinking and decision-making.

Remove unnecessary markings, clutter and noise. Sufficient lighting is provided. Ensure the environment, memory supports, activities and materials are familiar (set up for success and available and accessible), can be clearly seen (contrast is important) and easily recognizable.

- Determine required size of font and images needed for visual cues. Lighting, noise and colour contrast is considered. Abilities taken into account.

Enable and expose abilities.

- The environment and the person is set up for success, with the goal of exposing abilities, enhancing independence and fostering self-esteem.

All materials required for the activities are provided, aesthetically pleasing and self-contained. Materials are attractive and progress from simple to more difficult and concrete to more abstract.

- Environment allows learning to progress in sequence and tasks are broken down to match ability, with opportunities to practice as needed. Memory supports are in place (for all aspects of engagement in life and living).

Templates, Manipulatives, Environmental Cueing and Sequencing

- Templates (the “map” or “guide” that shows the individual where things are to be placed), cueing (using words and/or pictures) and/or manipulatives (the items that are to be used for the activity/task) are provided as needed. Tasks are matched to abilities, and broken down and sequenced as needed. The WOW model guides decision-making.

Environment is prepared, and modified as needed.

You have created an environment where people can be the best they can be based on needs, preferences, interests, skills, habits, routines and abilities. The WOW Model, along with NISA, guides thinking, and modifications as needed. Each person is up for success.

PRESENT

The Dementi*Ability* Methods

Preparation

Prepare the environment

- The environment has been created, according the CREATE Principles. In LTC and other organizations, staff and families work as a team. At home, care partners work together.

Rooms look like their purpose, with things to do that are available and accessible and connected to details discovered in the WOW model.

- The WOW details guide practice. There are things to do in both private and public spaces.

Implementation

Extend Invitation

- Ask the participant, “**Would** like to . . . ?” If possible, provide a choice. (Do not ask “Could you. . . ?”)

Show what to do by demonstrating

- Demonstrate – one step at a time, keeping your instructions simple. Working from the person’s dominant side, demonstrate then ask the person to try. Repeat as needed & simplify or make more difficult as needed.

Extend a sincere “Well done”, “Good job” and “Thank you”, as appropriate

- Provide positive feedback, with remarks such as “Well done” and “Good job.” End the interaction with “Thank you”. If the activity/task is a routine, ask if the person would like to do this again, refer to the schedule and check item off when completed.

Needs, Interests, Skills and Abilities have been taken into account, adjustments are made as needed and outcomes are recorded in the WOW summary form.

- Needs of the whole person are met (body, mind and spirit). Modifications are made as needed.

The prepared therapeutic environment has enabled abilities and engaged people socially, cognitively and physically. Each person has been provided with diverse opportunities to give, to do for self and live in a world with meaning, purpose and joy. You have created a place when people want to live, work and visit.

Dementia*Ability* Methods

Overview

Principles: CREATE & PRESENT

The focus is on an enriched, prepared environment where individuals are engaged in life with meaning & purpose. Abilities enabled.

Treat the Treatable
Prevent excess disability

Understand memory - support
declarative loss & understand
procedural memory/spared capacity.

Whole Person Focused (Body, Mind & Spirit*) - NISA

* Including social, cultural & spiritual

Needs

Interests

Skills

Abilities

The How is in the WOW!

Be a detective!

Who?
(Past & present)

Observations.

What are you
going to do?