



Caregiver Tips on Useful Holistic Treatments for Memory Care

Experts in the field say that holistic therapies that incorporate art, music, pets, reminiscing and other pleasurable activities can enhance both your loved one's physical and emotional well-being. These therapies can reduce stress and agitation, and enable self-expression and social engagement, even after dementia has progressed.

- **Art** – Art therapy proponents believe that art activities enhance the health and wellbeing of loved ones with dementia in a variety of highly beneficial ways. Art therapy has been shown to improve mood, decrease agitation and outbursts, increase the ability for self-expression and communication, and provide an important sense of accomplishment and purpose.
- **Music** – Research indicates that music is a useful therapy that can increase cognitive function in those with dementia. Your loved one's favorite music can provide a pleasant way for them to connect with the outside world, even after verbal communication has become a challenge. Music can reduce agitation and improve behavioral issues that are common in the middle-stages of the disease. Even in the latter stages of Alzheimer's, a person may be able to sing lyrics to a song from their youth.
- **Pets** – Pets have been found to have a soothing effect on loved ones with dementia by creating feelings of peace and calm while also helping to recreate pleasant memories of their own beloved pets. Dogs and other animals have a unique way of connecting with humans that offers a special sense of comfort, relaxation and well-being. Says Karin Winegar, author of "Saved: Rescued Animals and the Lives They Transform," "The human-animal bond bypasses the intellect and goes straight to the heart and emotions and nurtures us in ways that nothing else can."
- **"Reminiscence Therapy"** – Reminiscing about past events, old friends and fond memories is another important way to keep your loved one pleasantly engaged. Try listening to music from your loved one's younger days, go through old photo albums together and discuss pleasant memories of happy days gone by. Says [Christine Kennard](#), author of "Reminiscence Therapy and Activities for People with Dementia" <http://alzheimers.about.com/cs/treatmentoptions/a/reminiscence.htm>, "For people with Alzheimer's disease, encouraging the act of reminiscence can be highly beneficial to their inner self and their interpersonal skills. It is about giving the person with Alzheimer's a sense of value, importance, belonging, power and peace."

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- **Exercise: For Both of You** – Regular exercise is good for general health and also provides a way for caregivers and their loved ones to reduce their physical and emotional stress while improving strength and balance. Additionally, recent university research has shown that exercise can reduce and delay symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease.
- **Have Fun Together** – Continue to do the things your loved one most enjoys for as long as he/she is able. Take a walk together or spend some time in the garden. Familiar activities are usually pleasurable to someone with Alzheimer’s.

North Woods Village at Edison Lakes is the area’s first single-purpose residential memory care assisted living community dedicated to caring for those with Alzheimer’s disease, dementia and other memory impairments as well as providing education, support and resources to area caregivers and their families. The unique, purpose built architectural design of North Woods Village at Edison Lakes is one element of “**New Directions**,”SM the community’s signature memory care program that provides the optimal balance of loving care, dignified support, social engagement, wellness and independence.

For more information on **North Woods Village at Edison Lakes** and our [Caregiver Education & Support Calendar](#), please [contact us](#) today!

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