

**TOGETHER  
FOR FUN!**  
PROGRAM



Pleasurable Moment  
Enhancing Approach

## TOGETHER FOR FUN! PROGRAM

RESTORING  
HAPPINESS  
ENJOY TIME WITH  
YOUR LOVED ONE

CAREGIVER'S GUIDE



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***FINDING A MOMENT OF  
PEACE IN THE WHIRLWIND  
OF CAREGIVING TO  
BECOME ONCE AGAIN  
A SPOUSE, A CHILD, A  
DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, A  
SON-IN-LAW, A SISTER,  
A BROTHER, A NEPHEW  
OR A NIECE, A FRIEND ...  
AND REDISCOVER THE  
ORIGINAL MEANING OF  
OUR BOND!***

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

***To Chantal Caron***

***May this guide contribute to the on-going commitment to supporting caregivers, which has distinguished her life.***

This guide is the result of more than twenty years of practice with people suffering from memory impairment, which have led me to carry out a doctoral project to develop a support approach for caregivers of people with memory impairment. This approach focuses on enhancing the positive aspects of everyday life.

Several people have contributed to the achievement of this guide. I would first like to thank Chantal Caron and Johanne Desrosiers, professors at the University of Sherbrooke, for their support throughout my doctoral studies.

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enhance the approach. Your support, your rigor and your great availability are precious to me.

Therefore, these few pages are the fruit of a whole community of thought. I hope they will be useful for those involved in a caregiver role for a person with memory impairment. Thank you for being there and good luck!

***Hélène Carbonneau, Recreologist, Ph.D.  
in Gerontology***

## INTRODUCTION

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The onset of memory issues is a shock, not only for the person affected, but also for their loved ones. This situation shakes the loved ones of the person affected.

The caregiver duties often take up a lot of space and leave little room for the activities that nurture the precious bond of spouse, child, daughter-in-law, or son-in-law.

The pleasant moments shared with the loved one allow them to become, for a moment, something other than a “caregiver” in the relationship with him or her. They are a source of energy.

That is why they are so important. However, maintaining a meaningful contact with a person with memory impairment is not easy.

This guide is intended to help families recapture more pleasant moments shared with their loved one with memory impairment.

It offers simple ways to support the presence of such moments in the daily life of caregivers with their loved one. To begin with, this guide explains how to integrate recreation to the daily lives of people with dementia. It then identifies ways to adapt activities to the abilities and limitations of the loved one.

Then, ideas and approaches are suggested to support communication with a loved one with a memory impairment. Finally, a few activity cards offer ideas for activities that are simple to put in place with a person with memory impairment.

# **IMPORTANCE OF PLEASANT MOMENTS**

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The scope of the tasks often associated with the role of caregiver brings about many important changes on a daily basis. The caregiver gradually takes on the role of caregiving or therapist rather than that of a spouse, child, or friend.

This contributes to the already heavy burden associated with the caregiver's role by reducing the number of pleasant moments daily. Even if the loved one's memory is severely affected, it is still possible to share pleasant moments with them. However,

adapting the activities is not always obvious. It is sometimes difficult to see how to carry out leisure activities with a person with memory impairment.

In the following pages, you will find recommendations on how to develop leisure activities that are adapted to your loved one's specific needs. You will see that spending quality time with your loved one often requires very little. Trivial activities can greatly contribute to the improvement of quality of life as much for the caregiver as for the loved one. These special moments are to be cherished by the caregiver/loved one as they are an important component of the relationship and allow the maintenance of a positive atmosphere favourable to improving the quality of everyday life.

## **PLEASURABLE MOMENT ENHANCING APPROACH (PMEA)**

It can be difficult to consider integrating leisure activities during your visits with your loved one. Even so, such activities nourish precious the bond between spouses, parent, and child, daughter, or son-in-law. These pleasant moments shared with a loved one allow you, at least for a short time, to become once again someone other than “caregiver” to the individual experiencing memory impairment. These moments are a source of energy. Therefore, they are so important.

Leisure is a way to help reclaim good times with your loved one. The common perception we frequently have of leisure can sometimes make it difficult to see how meaningful and pleasurable activities can be shared with our loved one suffering from memory impairment. Indeed, notions of competition or performance are often

associated with recreational activities, which is difficult for a person with a memory impairment.

This approach proposes to focus **on what we experience during the activity more than on the results obtained**. In this approach, the activity becomes secondary. It is only a pretext to create moments of well-being. A vision of the leisure adapted to people with memory impairment is based on the following thought: “When the memory fades ... accompany them in tenderness”. In fact, the recreational activity is only a pretext to create joy in everyday life. A very simple activity can have a significant impact. Simple gestures such as sharing a coffee, listening to our favourite music can make a huge difference in our day. What must always be kept in mind is **that it’s not about carrying out of activities, but rather to provide moments of well-being**. The pleasurable moment enhancing approach builds on two essential elements:

- the need for psychological comfort
- the emotional memory.

## NEED FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL COMFORT

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Individuals with memory impairment sometimes experience moments of anxiety or tension, which greatly reduce their psychological comfort. The presence of pleasurable moments in their life comes to mitigate this situation just as a good cushion will provide physical comfort. For example, looking at images from one's past can help calm a person with memory impairment.

Of course, there is little chance that people with severe memory impairment remember having participated in a recreational activity one hour or even five minutes after the activity has taken place. Still, the state of well-being they will have experienced during the activity will remain with them

for much longer and that is the desired effect.

**Providing leisure activities for people with cognitive impairment can provide a sense of well-being that lasts far longer than the activity itself.** The inner peace thus created can become a powerful element in their quality of life.

In addition, the presence of pleasurable moments helps

to create a positive climate in the person's living environment. This is as beneficial to the person suffering from memory impairment as for those who are close to them.

Thus, after having spent a pleasant moment, the people feel good. They may not be able to say why they feel this good, but their well-being remains, and that's the most important part.

## EMOTIONAL MEMORY

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There are different forms of memory. Some, such as short-term memory, are affected by the disease earlier while others may remain present longer. The emotional memory is one of the most persistent memories. It concerns the emotions that are related to events and people. Therefore, even if a loved one is no longer able to recognize, for example, their daughter or spouse, he or she may smile when seeing them, as their image remains associated with a positive emotion. In short, even when a person with a memory impairment has

forgotten the identity of their loved ones or their personal history, certain circumstances can still arouse positive emotions in them through the associated emotional memory. By the knowledge that the family and friends have of the person, it is possible to identify activities that could be favourable to the well-being of the person with a cognitive impairment by the positive emotion that is related to it. It is often a matter of details. A song, a photo or a particular dish may have the potential to bring about a positive emotion in the person with a cognitive impairment. Knowing these details is invaluable in contributing to your loved one's quality of life, so don't hesitate to share with your loved one's caregivers.

# **BASIC NOTIONS OF ADAPTED ANIMATION**

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**IT IS POSSIBLE TO SHARE GOOD TIMES WITH A PERSON WITH MEMORY IMPAIRMENT AS LONG AS CERTAIN ELEMENTS ARE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION TO FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY. HERE ARE SOME KEY PRINCIPLES TO KEEP IN MIND TO CREATE A FAVOURABLE SITUATION:**

- simplify the rules of the game or the activity;
- proceed step-by-step;
- limit the sources of stimulation based on the person's abilities;
- look for a safe environment for the person;
- be focused on the climate and not on the results;
- seek the immediate well-being of the person with memory impairment.

More specific attention to details may be helpful when dealing with certain difficulties, but these main guidelines remain universal. What is important is to focus on the immediate well-being of your loved one as well as your own. Remember that you cannot give what you do not possess. Thus, it is also important for you to enjoy the activity to share the enjoyment with your loved one.

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## DIFFICULTIES COMMUNICATING

### NATURE OF THE DIFFICULTIES

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People with memory impairment present significant difficulties, sometimes even being unable to communicate adequately. They often have major difficulties decoding the messages.

Communication is more through the senses (hearing, sight, smell, touch, and taste) than through words. Eye contact and touch are very important.

The presence of too many sources of stimulation accentuates this problem. It is necessary to use an adapted approach and the quantity, and the quality of stimulation must be controlled. This difficulty sometimes leads to agitated behaviours that reflect the person's insecurity.

### HOW TO ACT

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- establish eye contact before giving an instruction;
- simplify and even limit the instructions;
- give only one simple instruction at a time;
- speak slowly and clearly;
- use simple, short words;
- accompany speech with a gesture to make it easier to understand;
- consider all sources of stimulation present (television, radio, etc.) in the environment and, if necessary, reduce them;
- use the validation technique if needed and avoid insisting that the individual follows the instructions to the letter;
- the important thing remains the pleasure and not the result, if the person's behaviour is safe.

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## DIFFICULTY IN DOING CERTAIN THINGS, SUCH AS BUTTONING A SWEATER

### NATURE OF THE DIFFICULTIES

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People with memory impairment often have difficulty in manipulating objects or make certain gestures. For example, they may forget how to use a fork or how to button up a sweater.

It's the loss of automatic actions or of what is called the procedural memory. Each movement requires a voluntary control of the person to succeed in making the desired gesture. Health professionals speak of this as being "dyspraxia difficulties."

### HOW TO ACT

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- avoid the complex use of objects in carrying out the activity (e.g., playing pockets with a target on the ground rather than the traditional game)
- focus on the integration into the group more than on performance in carrying out the activity;
- aid in the handling of objects;
- continue to encourage autonomy with adapted accessories, by simplifying the task or by compensating for difficulties (example: give one utensil at a time during meals);
- use the potential still present (appeal to other skills like choosing colours);
- proceed step-by-step;
- give only one instruction at a time;
- have written instructions when needed;
- have step-by-step models for carrying out manual projects;
- act as a model by doing the gesture at the same time.

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## ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATION DIFFICULTIES

### NATURE OF THE DIFFICULTIES

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The attention and concentration abilities can also be affected. It becomes very difficult, even impossible, for people with memory impairment to keep track of an activity for a long period. For example, they can stop taking care of the volunteer's dog or playing with pockets if someone is talking in the hallway.

The slightest element can distract them and disrupt their attention.

Too much effort to concentrate can also be disruptive. It is essential to properly measure the concentration efforts required and their duration.

### HOW TO ACT

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- limit the sources of distraction (no music while talking to the person, carry out the activity in an appropriate room, do not have too many objects on the table);
- choose activities that do not require a high level of attention (e.g., play battle instead of SKIP-BO)
- encourage "one on one" situations;
- adjust the duration of the activity to the loved one's ability. carry out several small activities rather than a long one;
- vary the intensity of concentration requested or change the activity to allow for relaxation.

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## MEMORY DIFFICULTIES

### NATURE OF THE DIFFICULTIES

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Although the difficulties may concern either recording or accessing information, the daily result is that the person affected is no longer able to use the information necessary to perform certain tasks.

The memory difficulties limit the access to recent memories necessary for an activity. For example, if you play a game of cards with several people, when it is your turn to play again, the person will have completely lost track and sometimes won't even remember which game they are playing.

In some cases, the long-term memory is often better preserved, and it can be interesting to call upon it. Even more so, if the future is uncertain and the present more difficult to live with, the past remains rich in sources of value.

### HOW TO ACT

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- avoid activities that are calling upon the short-term memory;
- focus more on activities that call upon the long-term memory, memories;
- use various means to remind the activities (for example, calendar, agenda Address book);
- appeal to the skills acquired in the past and still present, the memory of gestures as stirring the dough of a cake;
- avoid questions involving memory that may confront the person (e.g. "What are your children's names?" "How many grandchildren do you have?"). Ask instead: "Tell me about your children."

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## DIFFICULTIES IN JUDGMENT

### NATURE OF THE DIFFICULTIES

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The impairments can also result in difficulty in analyzing information and making an adequate judgment concerning the action to be taken in a specific situation.

For example, in a set of cards, the person is no longer able to evaluate the best strategy and may provide the wrong card.

### HOW TO ACT

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- avoid games that require too much strategy;
- provide support in the choice of solutions. (For example, by giving a choice of answers);
- modify the approach (for example, by playing with all the cards open), each contributing to the other person's game - cooperative approach - or playing in teams);
- keep in mind that rules can be changed and that what matters is the pleasant experienced during the activity;
- in quizzes, use a freehand team approach where the answer of the greatest number is considered;
- adopt the same approach for all players (avoid making feel apart those with memory impairment).

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## THE PERSON HAS DIFFICULTY DECODING WHAT IT SEES

### NATURE OF THE DIFFICULTIES

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The cognitive impairments can also affect visual perception.

The health professionals speak of this as being “perceptual difficulties”.

The person can then have difficulty decoding visual stimuli (for example, it will be difficult to find one object in a set, such as of finding a spoon in a drawer of utensils).

While their vision may be functional, it is the capacity to recognize or retrieve objects that is impaired: it is how the brain interprets what it sees.

**Hemianopia** is reflected by the loss of part of the visual field.

**Hemineglect** causes rather the person to forget to consider information from the affected visual field. People having suffered a stroke, or a vascular dementia don’t always succeed in compensating for their hemineglect. It is then necessary to offer stimuli in the field of vision which is healthy

### HOW TO ACT

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- avoid reflections on the objects;
- promote contrasts;
- consider the healthy visual field and compensate by placing the material accordingly in the non-affected visual field;
- isolate the objects (e.g., avoid baskets in which all pencils and brushes are gathered);
- circumvent the perceptual difficulties. For example, hide all holes in the drawings in a stencil except the one you want to use).

# COMMUNICATION

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## PRINCIPLES

Communication is essential to help people with memory impairment to maintain a relationship and retain their identity. This communication can be both verbal and non-verbal or mixed (body language, gestures, touch). It requires patience and often a lot of imagination on the part of the caregivers.

The following suggestions may be helpful in gaining insight into a relationship with a person with memory impairment.

**1. Set the Stage:** distractions (music, television, etc.) can interfere with communication. In reducing them, it becomes easier to communicate with a person with a memory impairment. Make sure the environment in which you are is quiet (e.g., if the TV or radio is distracting the person, turn it off before you begin to interact with the person).

**2. Retain their attention:** Before you start talking to them, approach the person gently and calmly from a position facing them. You can also draw their attention by gently touching their hand or their arm. Start talking to them only when you feel that they are ready to listen to you.

**3. Establish eye contact:** always maintaining eye contact with the person is conducive to communication. If possible, sit or stand facing them without taking your eyes off them.

**4. USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE:** it is preferable to use simple words and make short sentences. Speak clearly and slowly. If the person has a hearing impairment, stand in front of them and speak quietly.

**5. Pay attention to your loved one's reactions:** Your loved one's reactions to what you are saying give an indication of what it understands. Pay attention to the expressions of their face and non-verbal manifestations (agitation, tense muscles, etc.) which are good emotion indicators. Try to react according to their mood and consider their feelings. Knowing the person well is a helpful element. The observing behaviours, exploring the past, and learning about its current condition are all helpful in gaining insight into their feelings of your loved one. Remain calm, your loved one will in turn find himself calm and reassured.

**6. Give one message at a time: have simple conversations.** Avoid giving several instructions at a time. Do not give too many choices. Questions that require an answer with a "yes" or "no" are easier than open questions. For example, ask him or her: "Do you want to eat a Pear?" Rather than "What would you like to eat as a snack?"

**7. Illustrate:** make gestures or show objects related to what you want to say while talking with them. For example, gesture to drink if you want them to drink or, if it's time for a bath, show them the soap and towel to explain.

**8. Repeat the key information:** If the person doesn't understand what you are saying the first time, repeat calmly using the same words. The use of the same words is essential; otherwise, the loved one will start the analysis process thinking that a new message is coming in.

# VALIDATION TECHNIQUE

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The validation technique consists of recognizing the emotion experienced or expressed by the person with memory impairment in their words or behaviours. It then becomes possible to adapt to their needs and appease them or shift their thoughts.

The validation can be verbal, non-verbal, or mixed. The important thing is to recognize the emotion and act with the person according to what they are feeling.

## **Verbal validation:**

- listen to what the person is expressing verbally;
- validate the feeling guessed or the emotion observed by using reflection and rephrasing, i.e., express in your words what you understand from their message to better understand what the person is trying to express in its words or its actions (For example: say "you are worried" if the individual seems anxious if the person seems anxious about being late to make dinner for their children);
- explore the feelings expressed and the meaning of what is said using words such as Who? What? Where? How? Avoid using the Why which can potentially increase anxiety;

- use reminiscence to bring back memories to the person and better understand the person. For example, to someone looking for their father, ask them about what he or she did for a living or how good of a singer he or she was, etc.

## **Non-verbal validation:**

- establish eye contact and observe the non-verbal language of your loved one (e.g., facial expression, body movements, breathing patterns);
- observe the emotions expressed through the physical manifestations and try to associate the observed behaviours with the person's needs (love, security);
- try to formulate the feeling felt by reflecting the manifestations. For example, say: "You seem angry; you're making big eyes." This provides validation by recognizing both the behaviour and the feeling;
- use touch (touch the hand, the forearm). The greater the disorientation, the more useful touch is to communicating with the person;
- use a calm tone of voice, gentle and non-threatening by staying physically very relaxed. The more the person is disoriented, the more useful the combination of various stimuli is to establish communication (voice, touch, eye contact).

The validation technique can be less effective when the person is more upset or tired. In that case, the diversion technique is useful to help the loved one with memory impairment take their mind off things.

# DIVERSION

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## TECHNIQUE

This approach is useful when the person is disturbed by a fixed idea or another situation and is becoming agitated. This method allows you to divert attention and change from the ideas that cause concern among your loved one.

The diversion is a short-term intervention and can be performed different ways. Overall, the approach consists of proposing an activity or introducing a topic of conversation that captivates the person to get them to drop the idea that is causing the disturbance. There are two main approaches to create a diversion: the gestural diversion or the activity-based diversion.

- **gestural diversion:** intervene with the person by making a significant gesture to attract their attention to take their mind off the situation (e.g., looking out the window by pulling back the curtains).
- **activity-based diversion:** this time, we intervene with the person in offering them a meaningful and repetitive activity that they like a lot or that refers to tasks often done in the past (e.g., "Come on, let's eat a cookie" or "Come on, let's water the plants").

Good knowledge of the person is a major asset in coming up with ideas for diversion. The family members and friends have a deeper knowledge of the person and are in the best position to come up with ideas to capture their

loved one's attention.

The family's involvement is therefore very useful to better target what is meaningful to the person.

It is useful to develop means to help apply this approach. A photo album (family, activity), books or magazines on subjects that the person is passionate about may be useful in this sense.

Similarly, it is good to identify meaningful activities for the loved one, either:

- listening to music. this is soothing and most people have favourite songs or tunes;
- remember the past looking at photo albums may allow the person to recall pleasant memories;
- participate in tasks such as cooking, cleaning, gardening if these tasks do not exceed your loved one's abilities;
- physical activity is always relevant. Simply walking, dancing, and doing very simple exercises can be very enjoyable for your loved one.

What matters is to remember that there is no magic formula. An idea can work one day and not the next depending on the context. Do not be discouraged when an idea fails. It is from your knowledge of the person and by the concrete experimentation of means that it is possible to find little by little tricks adapted to each one and to call upon them in time.

## CONCLUSION

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In closing, we would like to emphasize two aspects that we feel are essential to remember to increase the pleasure of time spent with a loved one with a memory impairment.

The first thing is to keep in mind that despite the magnitude of the memory loss, the people are still able to feel good. Indeed, various things can please them. It is important to remember that the pleasure felt remains within the person even after the activity, and even if that person does not remember what he or she did.

***“Happiness is not a matter of memory, but rather positive emotions felt by the person.”***

A second essential element is that the activities you propose must also be pleasant for you. If you are not comfortable in what you’re doing, your loved one will feel it. It is important that you enjoy the activities that you do with your loved one.

***“A shared pleasure is the key to happy moments for both you and your loved one.”***

We hope that this information will be useful to you and help you make the most of the moments shared with your loved one with a memory impairment.

***“Good continuation of your relationship!”***

## **A FEW TOOLS TO HELP YOU**

## A FEW IDEAS OF ACTIVITIES

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### A FLOWER IN THE DAILY LIFE, THE PLEASANT MOMENTS

The little joys of everyday life contribute greatly to our quality of life. These moments go often unnoticed, but their impact remains major.

Unfortunately, it's easy for us to overlook them. Even more so, when you must take on several roles including being a caregiver to a loved one with a memory impairment.

It becomes even more important to be aware of what is conducive to generating such moments in our lives. Here are a few suggestions:

1. take time to think about the little things (e.g.: having coffee, going outside, playing with the dog) that can bring pleasure to your life or your relationship with your loved one with a memory impairment;
2. the list of pleasant activities enclosed is a tool to assist you in this reflection;
3. from the list of pleasant activities, assess the current situation of these moments when visiting your loved one;
4. choose certain "pleasant activities" that you would like to increase in your life or in your relationship with your loved one;
5. integrate more of these activities in the time spent with your loved one. sometimes, it doesn't take much to make it happen. If necessary, you can talk to the recreation worker in the unit where your loved one resides, he or she will try to help you.

**Have fun!**

# LIST OF PLEASANT EVENTS

Below is a list of potentially enjoyable activities that can be included in your daily life. Take a few minutes to ask yourself how much pleasure you associate with these activities and how often you do them with your loved one. We invite you to add other activities that you like and that are not in the list.

This exercise can help you identify simple activities that you could incorporate more into your visits with your loved one and that could contribute to both of your well-being.

| Pleasure associated with the activity and frequency |                  |   |   |                      |   |   |                   |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------|---|---|----------------------|---|---|-------------------|--|--|
|                                                     | 0<br><i>None</i> |   |   | 1<br><i>A little</i> |   |   | 2<br><i>A lot</i> |  |  |
| List of pleasant activities                         | Pleasure         |   |   | Frequency            |   |   | Target            |  |  |
| 1. Writing letters, sending greeting cards          | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 2. Listening to the radio or music                  | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 3. Praying or meditating                            | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 4. Sharing dessert                                  | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 5. Reminiscing about the past                       | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 6. Enjoying a cup of coffee or tea                  | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 7. Eating fresh fruit                               | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 8. Visiting a park                                  | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 9. Singing old songs                                | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 10. Reading cartoons                                | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 11. Playing with a domestic animal                  | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 12. Watching the news on television                 | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 13. Taking care of house plants or a garden         | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 14. Looking at pictures                             | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 15. Doing cross-word puzzles                        | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 16. Reading the newspaper                           | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 17. Talking about sports                            | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 18. Breathing fresh air                             | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 19. Using hand cream, having a manicure             | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 20. Sitting in the sun                              | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |
| 21. Reading a magazine                              | 0                | 1 | 2 | 0                    | 1 | 2 |                   |  |  |

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Inspired from Lewinsohn *et al* (1978). *Control Your Depression*. Practive-Hall, Englewood, New Jersey. Translated by: Willmotte, J., Charles, G., Hynes, S. & Hershkowitz, C. Dans: Cottraux, Bouvard & Legeron (1986). *Méthodes et échelles d'évaluation des comportements*, 176-191.

## ACTIVITY SHEETS

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### BASED ON THE PLEASURABLE MOMENT ENHANCING APPROACH

The next section is intended to give you concrete examples of activities that can be carried out with your loved one.

Each section was developed to help you **share meaningful, happy moments with your loved one.**

You will also find, in each activity sheet, sources to consult for carrying out your activities.

## CATEGORIES

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### SOCIAL

- Manicure and hand care
- Birthday planner
- Loving memories journal
- Family memories
- Life box

### INTELLECTUAL

- Thematic books
- Music
- Audio-visual documents

### GAMES AND HOBBIES

- Rebus puzzles
- The encyclopaedia games
- Adapted Yum
- Modelling/moulding
- Other adapted games

### PHYSICAL

- Physical exercises
- Walking

# SECTION 1

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## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Memory impairment affects the social life. The impaired have more and more difficulties sustaining conversations. They easily lose the thread of the discussion, especially in the presence of several people. The conversation then stops quickly, and this can create discomfort.

In the following pages, you will find simple suggestions to help you have a good time with your loved one. It is possible that an activity works with one person and not with another. It may also work on one day and not another.

It is important to keep in mind that what is important is not to achieve the planned activity but to stimulate a climate conducive to allow the move of the pleasurable moments with the person.

## MANICURE AND HAND CARE

### OBJECTIVES:

1. promote a better self-image;
2. offer a privileged and individualized contact time.

### ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:

The caregiver observes the lady's clothing and suggests a choice of colours for her nails. The caregiver performs a manicure. One can also offer a light makeup as well as perfume or hand cream. Note that the use of scissors or nail clippers should be avoided to prevent any wounds that could cause problems. You should limit yourself to nail files. Similarly, for security reasons, it is preferable to use solvent in a jar with a sponge rather than the traditional liquid nail polish remover that the person is at risk of drinking.

This activity also appeals to some men who enjoy having their hands massaged with hand cream.

### REQUIRED MATERIAL:

Manicure kit:

- variety of polish;
- nail polish remover in a jar with integrated sponge (avoid bottles);
- nail files;
- hand cream;
- perfume;
- makeup;
- mirror.

## **BIRTHDAY AGENDA**

### **OBJECTIVES :**

1. encourage the maintenance of a social role as a parent, grandparent, or friend;
2. encourage the maintenance of relationships with the loved one.

### **ACTIVITY WORKFLOW :**

The activity requires prior preparation in complicity with the family. This last is invited to complete a monthly birthday agenda with the date of birth (including the year so that the volunteer knows the person's real age) for each family member (siblings, children, grandchildren). You can also add friends. For each person, the family member prepares a card, writes their address on an envelope.

During their visits, the caregivers invite their loved one to fill in the birthday cards of the month. They help the person write the message or does it for them based on their needs. The letter is mailed out. Generally, the loved one receives a return of affection from the person to whom the card was intended. This makes him feel important and appreciated.

### **REQUIRED MATERIAL :**

- birthday agenda;
- cards and envelopes (they can be found in packages. e.g., 5 for 1\$);
- a pencil and stamps.

## **HEART DIARY**

### **OBJECTIVES :**

1. encourage the maintenance of relationships with the loved ones.
2. allow the person to relive good times

### **ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:**

A notebook or lined book without text is placed in the dresser of the person with a memory impairment. All the family members and friends are invited to write messages, news, thoughts or other.

During the visits, the various family members can consult the book to get news about the family. The loved one then becomes the hub around which the family news revolves. The book can generate exchanges. The visits become more pleasant.

The notebook also acts as a record of the visits the person has received, which can sometimes provide comfort. Both staff and volunteers can use the notebook to create a pleasurable moment, make diversion, comfort the person.

### **REQUIRED MATERIAL :**

- a notebook and a pencil.

## **FAMILY MEMORIES**

### **OBJECTIVES :**

1. promote a better self-image for the person;
2. allow the person to reconnect with memories;
3. encourage the maintenance of a social role as a parent, grandparent, or friend;
4. encourage the maintenance of relationships with the loved ones.

### **ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:**

The family's involvement is valuable to develop a photo album of meaningful souvenirs to the person. Thematic albums can also be created (travel, sports, family, business, etc.). It is also interesting to put recent photos of various children and grandchildren with their names.

Family members, volunteers and staff can then use the album to share with the person and provide a pleasant moment with the most beautiful memories that have filled their life.

### **REQUIRED MATERIAL :**

- album;
- protective sheets without reflection;
- photos.

## **LIFE BOX OBJECTIVES**

### **OBJECTIVES :**

1. promote the continuity with previous experience;
2. allow the person to reconnect with memories;

### **ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:**

The collaboration of the family is important to build a life box. This box contains objects that are significant to the person, such as a favourite record, lyrics of a song, object that he or she has made (e.g., knitting, crocheting, picture of a piece of furniture, picture of their house, letter, trinket, piece of jewelry, piece of clothing).

It is important to avoid choosing objects that are too small since the person could try to swallow them. Similarly, sharp objects or objects that represent a form of danger should be avoided. Family members, volunteers, and staff can then use the box to share with the person. When opening the life box, far beyond the realizations, it is as if the person is saying: "Here I am!"

### **REQUIRED MATERIAL :**

- decorative box;
- various meaningful objects

## SECTION 2

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# INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES

Intellectual activities and memory impairment may seem incompatible. Yet, it is possible to maintain a continuity of such activities by following certain principles in adapting the activities:

- from the person's experience;
- simplify the activity;
- limit the disturbances.

Keeping in mind that the goal is to have a good time together, it then becomes easy to simply browse a book, listen to music or whatever.

### THEMATIC BOOKS

#### OBJECTIVE :

1. promote the continuity with previous experience;
2. allow the person to reconnect with its memories and interests.

#### ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:

During their life, your loved one has accumulated interests, made trips, lived moments that have marked its imaginary. Browse through books with beautiful pictures can promote contact with the positive emotions attached to them.

The caregiver or the family looks at a book with the loved one about:

- country or a city already visited;
- known era;
- subject that the loved one likes.

It is important to avoid memory-related issues and to focus on the emotions experienced in the present moment.

#### SOURCES:

Bookstores and libraries offer a variety of books on various destinations, flowers, animals, etc. Communication Québec has produced a series, the "**Aux limites de la mémoire**" collection, which deals with various themes such as daily life, construction sites, trains, and others.

## **MUSIC**

### **OBJECTIVE :**

1. promote the continuity with previous experience;
2. allow the person to reconnect with memories;

### **ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:**

Music has the potential to awaken positive emotions in people through the memories associated with it. The family aware of their loved one's musical tastes has a simple way to connect with him/her.

Listening to music or songs that were part of the happy times in your loved one's life could lead to moments of shared pleasure.

It is, however, necessary to ensure that no other stimuli interfere. It is important to limit the conversation. You can even sing together.

### **REQUIRED MATERIAL :**

- CD;
- CD drive.

## **VIDEO DOCUMENTS**

### **OBJECTIVE :**

1. promote the continuity with previous experience;
2. allow the person to reconnect with memories;

### **ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:**

Listening to an old movie, an old TV series, a documentary about a country are all possibilities that can hold the attention of a person with memory impairment and make them happy.

What is important here is to start from the interests and history of the person. During the viewing, avoid questions. Enjoy the present moment.

### **REQUIRED MATERIAL :**

- DVD
- DVD player

### **RESOURCES :**

Several television series are now available on DVD. They are sold in bookstores or rented from video clubs or libraries.

## SECTION 3

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# GAMES AND ENTERTAINMENT

Games are conducive to living happy moments. The only rule to follow is to simplify the rules!

In fact, it is important to make sure that the rules of the games do not become sources of anxiety, you will need to adjust the activities to the abilities of your loved one. As we joke about, there are no police officers who give tickets if you don't follow the rules of a board game to the letter.

In the following pages, you will find examples of game adaptations. Some organizations and companies also offer interesting games to use with people with a memory impairment.

### POSSIBLE RESOURCES:

- [sablier.com](http://sablier.com);
- Fédération québécoise du loisir en institution : [fqli.org](http://fqli.org);
- stores specialized in games.

### ADAPTED YUM

#### OBJECTIVES:

1. encourage moments of pleasure and well-being with loved ones;
2. encourage the maintenance of relationships with the loved one.

#### ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:

The game consists of an adaptation of the Yum game where participants must get all 6 numbers on the dice to win (see attached score sheet).

Participants roll the dice and check the numbers that they got for each dice on the score sheet. In the next round, participants roll the dice again and mark the numbers on the dice if they had not already obtained them. The winner is the first to complete all the numbers.

At the beginning of memory loss, a challenge can be added by being able to add up the numbers and check off a large number. For example, the person having rolled the dice 2 and 3 could check off 5.

For people at a more advanced stage, it is important to use 2-inch foam dice, as they may be tempted to put the smaller dice in their mouths risking choking.

What matters is to **adjust the rules according to the potential of the person** with a memory impairment!

#### REQUIRED MATERIAL:

- large size dice
- score sheets

## **RIDDLES**

### **OBJECTIVES :**

1. encourage moments of pleasure and well-being with loved ones;
2. encourage the maintenance of relationships with the loved one.

### **ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:**

From the clues and words representing the images, you write down your answer.

### **REQUIRED MATERIAL:**

- riddle games
- riddle sheet in appendix.

## **ENCYCLOPEDIA GAMES**

### **OBJECTIVES :**

1. encourage moments of pleasure and well-being with loved ones;
2. encourage the maintenance of relationships with the loved one.

### **ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:**

The encyclopedia game consists in finding words according to the letters and themes suggested.

### **REQUIRED MATERIAL:**

- pencil
- sheet of paper
- example of a game sheet in appendix

## **SKIP-BO**

### **OBJECTIVES :**

1. encourage moments of pleasure and well-being with loved ones;
2. encourage the maintenance of relationships with the loved one.

### **ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:**

The Skip-Bo game is a card game easy to adapt for use with a person with memory impairment while remaining fun and stimulating.

The aim of the adapted game remains to be the first to finish its stack of cards.

To begin it takes a 1 or a 13 that is placed in the center of the table to start a series. There can be up to 4 series in progress at a time in the center of the table.

In the game or traditional, the series are increasing or decreasing. An interesting adaptation of the rule is to have the person put the number after the one on top of the series.

Another way is to choose to do only increasing series.

What you must absolutely avoid is to point out your loved one's mistakes. This will create unnecessary anxiety and break the mood.

### **REQUIRED MATERIAL:**

- game of Skip-bo

## **MODELING**

### **OBJECTIVES :**

1. encourage moments of pleasure and well-being with loved ones;
2. encourage the maintenance of relationships with the loved one.

### **ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:**

Modeling (this can be clay, salt dough, modeling clay) is an ideal activity to stimulate the senses and creativity.

This activity allows the caregiver and the loved one to let their hands and gestures go as they please, without making any effort. It exercises the fingers and hands of people who are more reluctant to touch the material.

This activity provides a moment of relaxation and pleasant sensory and motor stimulation.

### **REQUIRED MATERIAL:**

- clay,
- edible dough, modeling clay (like Play-Do)
- plastic tablecloth
- towels or wet wipes to wash hands

## PUZZLE

### OBJECTIVES :

1. encourage moments of pleasure and well-being with loved ones;
2. encourage the maintenance of relationships with the loved one.

### ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:

There are adapted puzzles (5 to 25 pieces) with meaningful images for adults.

To help the loved one participate it is possible to propose a specific task such as find the pieces that have a right side. He or she then feels useful without being confronted with its difficulties if its abilities make it more difficult for them to assemble the pieces of the puzzle.

Although the principle of the puzzle is to build the image, in some cases, this can simply become a pretext to exchange for example about the image.

### REQUIRED MATERIAL:

- puzzle;
- easy to grab puzzle (thicker cardboard);
- small puzzle (25 pieces or less).

## DOMINOES

### OBJECTIFS :

1. encourage moments of pleasure and well-being with loved ones;
2. encourage the maintenance of relationships with the loved one.

### ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:

The game consists of placing all its dominoes; the winner is the one who places its last piece.

Open dominoes can be played; the important thing is to use the same rules for everyone.

Remember: simplify the rules of the game!

You can decide to play with the points and the colours. These constitute a double clue.

The important thing is the pleasure and well-being shared.

### REQUIRED MATERIAL:

- game of dominoes;
- chromino game

## SECTION 4

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# PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Living good moments together through simple physical exercises is pleasant in the daily life. There are several publications already developed by organizations specialized in the field that suggest different types of exercises.

### RESOURCES:

- Fadoq: [fadoq.ca](http://fadoq.ca);
- Kino-Québec: [kino-quebec.qc.ca](http://kino-quebec.qc.ca).

## WALKING

### OBJECTIVES :

1. encourage moments of pleasure and well-being with loved ones;
2. maintain physical activities

### ACTIVITY WORKFLOW:

Walking remains accessible and beneficial for people with a memory impairment for a long time. What is important is to choose a place where there is little risk for the loved one to enjoy a healthy walk where you can relax while moving.

# APPENDIX

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ADAPTED YUM

RIDDLES

ENCYCLOPEDIA GAME

# ADAPTED YUM\_\_\_\_\_

| Yum score sheet |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| names           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

| Yum score sheet |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| names           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# RIDDLES

Use the clues and words represented by the images to write your answer.

| CLUE                                                                                                                          | IMAGES                                                                                                                                                                    | Your Answer |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Inclination or slant, especially upward or downward                                                                           |  + silent P                                                                              |             |
| The root of this plant is often combined with other ingredients to make a sauce.                                              |  +      |             |
| A year containing an extra day in February.                                                                                   |  , 2008                                                                                 |             |
| An exceptionally tall building.                                                                                               |  ,  |             |
| A prize awarded for outstanding contributions to chemistry, physics, physiology or medicine, literature, economics and peace. | NO +                                                                                   |             |
| To be deliberately unfriendly or rude.                                                                                        |  +  |             |

# THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA

## GAMES

Find words that begin with the suggested letter

| Letter | First names | Animals | Cities   |
|--------|-------------|---------|----------|
| C      |             |         |          |
| M      |             |         |          |
| P      |             |         |          |
| Letter | Sports      | Flowers | Desserts |
| R      |             |         |          |
| A      |             |         |          |
| B      |             |         |          |

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