



**JUNE 1, 2019 BY JTTEXTAY**

## Dementia Montessori

I recently took a course to become a Certified Montessori Dementia Care Professional; the class I took was through the International Council for Certified Dementia Practitioners and the [Center for Applied Research in Dementia.](#)

We I have to admit that when I signed up, I had no idea how or what I was getting myself into and I was more than a little confused on exactly how this method for children would apply to persons with dementia. 6 hours later and I was convinced that we would be crazy not to employ Montessori methods in our daily interactions with persons with dementia. – the videos were nothing short of amazing!

The history of Marie Montessori and her methods are sound and proven (yes with children) and the same methods really appeared to add value for the person with dementia – so **WHY NOT?** I say hooray for anything that adds dignity and quality for dementia patients.

There not a whole lot on the subject so I had to dig around a bit to find more information. Below is an article I found on the Alzheimer's website about the Montessori Method for Dementia – it barely brushes the surface but might be enough to get you going on some research.

My favorite quote from the video –

***....That's not a dementia thing... That's a human thing..***

Such a powerful statement in the context of the patient/client videos.

If you are into learning more about quality of life for dementia patients, knowing what's new and different, I highly recommend you look in to [the course.](#)



*Marie Montessori*

## Using the Montessori Method for Dementia

February 20, 2019 Mark Huntsman

The Montessori Method is well-known for being used to successfully engage children, but it's also an approach that's gaining traction with caregivers of parents and senior loved ones with dementia. While it's still a new idea, there is already evidence that the Montessori Method can reduce anxiety for people with dementia by providing them with engaging activities that they find rewarding.

Learn more about how caregivers are using the approach to engage seniors and how you can put it into practice with a loved one.

## Connecting the Montessori Method to Dementia

Developed in the early 20th century, the Montessori Method of teaching holds that when you're working with children, you must consider their capabilities and needs. What are they able to do? What do they like to do? The balancing act the teacher performs centers on not challenging the students — you don't want them to become frustrated and give up — but rather, making the task a little beyond their comfort zone, so they still have the opportunity to improve. The same is true for those with dementia.

The Montessori Method of caregiving for dementia has a similar goal of engaging the senses in order to help seniors with the disease rediscover the world around them.

Providing the most effective care means maximizing the opportunities these individuals have to reconnect with a world they're losing access to. Caregivers and researchers alike are increasingly finding that sensory experiences created through art or music therapy and physical activities give senior loved ones with dementia positive emotions that they may have lost the ability to experience.

Though a senior may become paranoid or withdrawn as dementia advances, in many cases, their long-term memories will be largely well-preserved. The Montessori Method is about providing ways to connect with those memories. Presenting a senior loved one with fresh flowers and an empty vase may give him or her a way to step out of a sense of isolation and into a beautiful spring day, because the experience of putting the flowers in the vase is enough to powerfully call forth the memory of cutting fresh flowers, for instance.

The personal touch and positive attitudes that are hallmarks of the Montessori Method help caregivers maximize their loved ones' opportunities to reconnect with pleasant events of the past and to re-experience the accompanying positive emotions.

## How Caregivers Can Use the Montessori Method for Dementia

Dr. Cameron Camp, a psychologist in applied gerontology, discovered that the Montessori Method could be adapted into the basis of a new approach to dementia care. Dr. Camp states the problem this way: "How can we connect with the person who is still here?" One answer to this question is to use the Montessori approach to re-engage the types of memory that are spared by dementia, including motor memory such as how to dress and how to eat.

An example of a skills-building activity that Dr. Camp employs involves people with dementia using a slotted spoon to dig in a tub of dry rice for objects that are buried beneath the surface. When they find a "treasure," the rice falls through the slots, leaving the object on the spoon. In the process, their brains are re-learning the motor skills that are necessary to feed yourself.



*Cooking is a great way to re-engage women with dementia. Dr. camp recommends only 1 step at a time and allow 90 seconds for processing the information.*

"We want to flip the system on its ear," Dr. Camp says, "to change people's expectations about what people with dementia are capable of. Our job is to allow this person to be present — to help them, wherever they are in the journey of dementia, to be connected with a community and contribute to the best of their ability."

Let's take a look at different ways caregivers can put Montessori into practice:

1 For advanced dementia, people may take comfort in holding dolls, a series of dolls and doll clothes can make for a pleasurable activity.

2 For those who enjoy baking or cooking, baking ingredients, and a safe kitchen environment.

3 Have a basket of clean socks that need to be matched and folded.

4 Layout a basket of clean towels to fold.

5 Prep tables with materials for activities such as puzzles, sorting exercises, and other games.

6 Put out a bin of plastic plumbing tubes that can be connected and put together.



What we're increasingly learning is that those with dementia can come to not only enjoy the process of participating in something they used to regularly do, but also come away with a definite sense of accomplishment that can help improve their quality of life.

#### **GENERAL INFO**

**# ALZHEIMER'S, BRAIN CHANGE, DEMENTIA, DEMENTIA MONTESSORI, LEWY BODY, MEMORY, MEMORY LOSS, MONTESSORI, PARKINSON, VASCULAR DEMENTIA**