



September 2017, Volume 9

Preparing for the Holidays

We realize this is only September, and we don't mean to rush the time away. It really is not too early to begin to make – or revise – holiday plans. The holiday season is filled with excitement, travel, visits, special meals, decorations, and more! What may be excitement for one, may mean anxiety for another. Right now, in September, we can begin to objectively look at the calendar and plan for the holiday season to best meet the needs of people you support. When the changes of dementia are also being experienced by that person, the holiday season may not be so, "merry and bright" to them. Here are a few ideas to consider.

Be Realistic in Expectations

Recognizing, and acknowledging, the changes of memory loss, further declining verbal skills and difficulty with reasoning and judgment can be

extremely difficult to face. A holiday experience that was enjoyed once, and repeated through the years to become a holiday tradition, may need to be adjusted. Perhaps a NEW tradition is worth a try. If something different will be planned this year, now may be the right time to suggest a change. It will give everyone involved some time to adjust to the new plan. Keep in mind that the “reason for the season” is personal. If the focus is on gathering folks to share time together – make that time as pleasant as possible for everyone!

Be Flexible in Plans

It is important to have a plan, and equally important to have a back-up plan. If what has been planned is too difficult for someone, change the plan! Trying to convince someone, or rush someone, or argue with someone will result in anger, frustration and hurt feelings. These are certainly NOT what celebrations are all about!

Be Accepting of Change

We all know that “change” is part of life. It does not mean that change is easy. Recognize that this year may be different from last year, and that the individual may have different abilities from last year. The customs and celebrations may need to reflect that change this year.

VISITING

When visiting is part of a celebration, be sure someone will be at the person’s side. That someone should be familiar and offer reassurance in a room of people who may not be recognized. Monitor the environment for increasing noise level, and move to a quieter area to reduce anxiety. Limit the amount of time for the visit. Length of a visit can increase fatigue and result in an unpleasant experience. Visits should create good feelings, not lead to frustration.

MEALS

As much as possible, maintain the regular meal time schedule. Even a small amount of food at a regular time is better than skipping meal time altogether. Missing a regular meal time, or eating unfamiliar foods, can cause distress. Maintaining the familiarity of a routine has many advantages.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment has a powerful impact. Noise level, temperature, decorations, lighting, and size of the room all contribute to the comfort - or discomfort –of a person. Assess the environment and make any necessary changes to add to the enjoyment of the moment. Remember, you cannot change what is taking place inside someone, but the external environment can, and should, be adjusted.

The holiday season can be a time of anticipation, joy and fulfillment. Too often, the preparations and expectations can lead to feelings of distress and disappointment. Now is the time to look at the calendar and, realistically, make some plans. Perhaps, make some new plans.

If you are searching for a great “stocking stuffer”, the book, *Still Alice*, comes highly recommended. The author, Lisa Genova, is a brain researcher who created the main character, Alice, who develops Alzheimer’s disease. The book is filled with the interpretations of the world as seen through the eyes of Alice. Later in the book, what was really seen is revealed. It is also filled with the reactions to Alice by her husband, adult children and Alice’s professional colleagues. It offers great insight as to how the changing brain of an individual interprets the world.

Remember:

--Limit number and length of visits

--Keep regular meal times

--Adjust the environment

--Have a “Plan A”, and a “Plan B”, and a “Plan C”...

Most importantly...**Enjoy!!**

Activity Tip: “Back to School”

Goal: To increase social interaction and reminiscing.

Supplies: These are just ideas; you can add more supplies as you go. Put the items into a book bag or box.

- Spiral Notebook and/or loose leaf notebook paper
- Crayons
- Pencils
- Markers
- Pens
- 3 Ring Notebook
- Text book or library book
- Ruler
- Lunch box
- Book Bag

Sit in a group and start with introducing self and where they went to school, Elementary or High School. Start out by having someone reach in the bag or box and tell what the item is and how they used it in school. Pass the bag around until everyone has a chance to discuss an item. Others are encouraged

to add their stories as well.

As a leader here are some possible questions that can be asked. These are just a few questions to start the conversations.

- Did you wear a uniform to school?
- Did you have class photos taken?
- Did you use pencil or pen to write?
- Were you ever in the Principal's office?
- Did you have a lot of homework?
- Did you like your teachers?
- What sort of lunch did you take to school?
- How did you get to school?
- Did you have to pray before class started?
- Did you say the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag?
- Did you lift your hand up to speak?
- Was your teacher strict?
- What was your favorite subject?
- Did you go on field trips and what was your favorite trip?
- Did you have a lot of friends?
- What playground equipment did you play on?

Reference: goldencarers.com – ‘School Days Reminiscing Game’

Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities to Host Training for Guardians of Adults

Guardians are required to complete a three-hour continuing education course

every calendar year. To help you meet this requirement, the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities is hosting two broadcasts provided by the Supreme Court of Ohio Judicial College on the subject of “Medications and Medical Advocacy” on Tuesday, October 10, 2017. The course is available free of charge.

This is a three-hour continuing education course, and you may attend one of the two broadcasts of the course being held that day from 8:45 a.m. – 12:00 Noon or from 1:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. to fulfill your education requirements for the year. You must be in attendance for the entire three-hour broadcast.

The sessions will be held in the Board’s Training Center at Larc Lane Center, 1155 Larc Lane, Toledo, Ohio, 43614.

Registrations are being taken from now through September 26. To register you may either call (614) 387-9445 or visit www.judicialeducation.ohio.gov. Select only one time slot for this continuing education broadcast course.



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