

Forget-Me-Not Spotlight

Filling the Day with Meaning DVD

With Teepa Snow

A review by Shannon Nosbisch, C.D.P., co-founder of Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness

According to Teepa Snow, a National Dementia Trainer, everyone with dementia should have **days of meaning and joy**. In this DVD, she discusses ways to help them have these days of meaning and joy by engaging them in activities. She is filming this video in a long-term care facility, but all her ideas and information are great for an at-home caregiver, too.

In three chapters, 1) Focusing on Common Challenges, 2) Major Categories of Engagement and 3) Working Examples of Getting People Engaged, Teepa educates us on information we need to know to make a loved one's day full of meaning and joy. There are three precepts that every caregiver needs to understand. They are:

1. All people need to be needed.
2. Dementia steals away roles and responsibilities that make us who we are.
3. Activities can make a critical difference in health and well-being of people with dementia, **IF** used appropriately for the degree of involvement, using the "Just Right" Challenge, which she discusses.

Good activities are ones that involve plants, animals, people, music or objects. She also stresses that caregivers need to know the person they are caring for – the history of their lives. This personal history will affect which activities they will do and how they may do them. Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness has a Personal History Sheet on our website at www.effinghamalz.org that can be downloaded.

Teepa Snow discusses six building blocks for a great activity program: 1) Know the person and the caregiver, 2) understand activities, 3) make and use a schedule, 4) manage the environment, 5) build staff schedules, and 6) have the resources to succeed. She brings it all together in this DVD for everyone to understand. Most, if not all, activities can be done very inexpensively.

At our Forget-Me-Not Resource Centers, we have Reminiscence Toolkits that can be checked out. These are a great activity to use at home and may give you ideas for other activities to do at home.

With all activities, it is about the process, not the outcome. It is about giving the person living with dementia moments of meaning and joy in their lives, and, as a result, helping the caregiver cope with the stress of caring for them. Filling the Day with Meaning will give

professional caregivers, at-home caregivers and families ideas and ways they can create moments of meaning and joy for their loved ones and themselves.

This resource is available at the Effingham Public Library, Flora Public Library, Evans Public Library, Newton Public Library, Greenup Township Public Library, Shelbyville Public Library and the Mattoon Public Library in the Forget-Me-Not Resource Center. If you do not have a library card, ask at the main desk how you can check it out.