

## Forget-Me-Not Spotlight

### Progression of Dementia

#### Seeing Gems – Not Just Loss

#### With Teepa Snow

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

This DVD is one of a series with Teepa Snow, who is a nationally known dementia trainer. In "Progression of Dementia", Teepa uses gem names to describe different stages of dementia. In the world of dementia, there are several different scales professionals use to determine what stage a person is in. This can be confusing to a caregiver, so Teepa uses the gems to help caregivers determine what stage their loved one is in, the characteristics of each stage and the caregiving techniques needed for that stage.

For every stage, she uses examples and demonstrates caregiving strategies. This helps you figure out which stage your loved one may be in and what family and caregivers can do to help with caregiving.

The gems in this DVD are as follows:

#### **SAPPHIRES** - *"True blue, optical cognition, healthy brain"*

Sapphires represent the beginning stage of dementia. They are still aware of their own interests and what they enjoy. They have characteristics of normal aging, however, they may begin to have feelings of depression due to changes associated with aging.

#### **DIAMONDS** - *"Clear and sharp, routines and rituals rule"*

At this stage, the dementia may not only start to become noticeable to you but they may feel as if something is not right as well. Like diamonds they are still *clear* enough to do the things they always have but are very *rigid* struggling to process new information. Diamonds prefer old habits, routines and familiar surroundings. You may notice that he or she often repeats the same questions, stories or phrases.

#### **EMERALDS** - *"Green and on the go, naturally flawed"*

The vibrant green of the naturally flawed emerald represents their desire to be on the go. They crave purpose, in a time where they are having obvious problems with communication and comprehension becoming lost in their past life, places and roles. You may notice them asking who, what, when and where often. You may also experience having your loved one

accuse you of something and having moments of frustration and fear. Keep in mind that emeralds have little to no awareness of their changes in ability believing they are living in reality and capable of independence even though they are not.

**AMBER** - *“Like a particle trapped in an amber, I am caught in a moment of time.”*

Ambers tend to focus on sensations and may fixate on touching and manipulating objects. Introducing soft fabrics, stuffed animals and items to sort through may bring comfort. Impatience may grow stronger at this point and being flexible with them is key. They are unable to control emotions and commonly become visibly distressed from seemingly simple things such as eating or accepting personal care.

**RUBIES** - *“Deep and strong in color, others stop seeing what is possible”*

It may appear from the outside that rubies are no longer capable of enjoyment or have the ability to interact, however, they are still able to make use of body rhythm, make big movements, notice voice rhythms and magnified facial expressions and even mimic sounds and gestures. Rubies may be able to pick up and hold items but do not expect them to know what to do with them.

**PEARLS** - *“Hidden within a shell, beautiful moments to behold”*

You will see profound changes in the bodies of pearls, however inside still survives a beautiful soul. Your loved one may frequently recognize familiar sounds and caring touches. Offer comfort and understand that even though they cannot control their body and may seem to be just a shell, they can still benefit from hearing your loving voice, keeping warm and comfortable and being given permission to go when they are ready.

“Progression of Dementia” can be viewed by Chapter (Gems) or as a whole. There is a lot of information in this DVD and you may want to view it more than once or review a chapter or two. There are two hours of information, tips and techniques.

In this DVD, caregivers can learn

- \*how to calmly convince your loved one to stop driving

- \*how to safeguard your relationship with your loved one as the disease progresses

\*why patients in later disease stages can't relax their muscles and how to safely handle them to reduce the risk of bruising

\*How to reduce the risk of falls

\*how to avoid unwanted behaviors by controlling the environment and effectively shifting your loved one's focus

\*about stage appropriate activities

By watching this DVD, caregivers and family members can better understand dementia, what stage their loved one is in, techniques that will give your loved one a better quality of life and avoid some stress for caregivers and family members.

*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.*