



360 Lexington Ave, New York, NY CARINGKINDNYC.ORG
646-744-2900



A Holistic Approach to Home Safety

How Caregivers Can Assess The Home Environment & Mitigate Safety Risks

Alyssa Parks M.S. OTR/L

OUR PRIORITIES

*Serving families
for over
45 years!*

- *Being a trusted partner for resources and compassionate support throughout the journey*
- *Creating and delivering meaningful, best practice programs and quality education*
- *Equipping dementia care staff, healthcare and service professionals*
- *Advancing awareness, research, policy*

caringkind

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Who do we serve?

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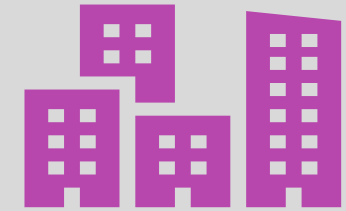
PEOPLE WITH
ALZHEIMER'S OR ANY
FORM OF DEMENTIA



FAMILY MEMBERS,
PARTNERS, FRIENDS
PROVIDING CARE OR
SUPPORT



HEALTHCARE
PROFESSIONALS,
AIDES, SERVICE
PROVIDERS



RESIDENTIAL,
COMMUNITY, &
CULTURAL
ORGANIZATIONS



Helpline



Navigation & Care
Consultations



Family Education
Workshops



Coaching Caregiving
Skills



Support Groups



Early-Stage
Programs



Social & Peer
Engagement



Palliative
Approaches



Professional
Development



Workforce Training



Building Dementia
Friendly Community



Research Initiatives

caringkind

OUR WORK

In Person & Virtual Person
Services

*Services provided
FREE of CHARGE*

*Multiple languages
(Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean)*

Upcoming Seminars

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*caringkindnyc.org/
education*

Upcoming Caregiver & Professional Education



The screenshot shows the caringkindnyc.org website. The navigation bar includes links for ABOUT, ALZHEIMER'S, PROGRAMS, **EDUCATION**, CAREGIVERS, PROFESSIONALS, PUBLICATIONS, WALK, ATHLETES, and WAYS TO GIVE. The 'EDUCATION' link is circled, and a yellow arrow points to it. Below the navigation bar is a red banner with the text 'Care Partner Education'. The main content area features a section titled 'Care Partner Education | Professional Education | Workforce Development' with a paragraph about free education webinars. Below this is a section titled 'Upcoming Education' with a search bar, a date selector set to '09/16/24', and buttons for 'Subscribe', 'Agenda', and 'Monthly'. A calendar for September 2024 is displayed, showing a '5:30pm-7pm Medicaid Home Care Webinar' on Thursday, September 12th, and a '10am-12pm' slot on Friday, September 13th.

Family Education Seminars - Monthly

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Legal & Financial Considerations



Understanding Medicaid



[caringkindnyc.org/
education/](https://caringkindnyc.org/education/)





Caregiving Through Changing Abilities and Dementia Stages



[caringkindnyc.org/
educationhub/](https://caringkindnyc.org/educationhub/)

Signs & Symptoms of Alzheimer's and other Dementias

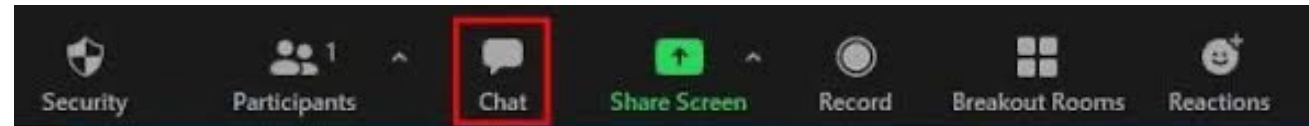


*Previous Recordings &
Upcoming Webinars*

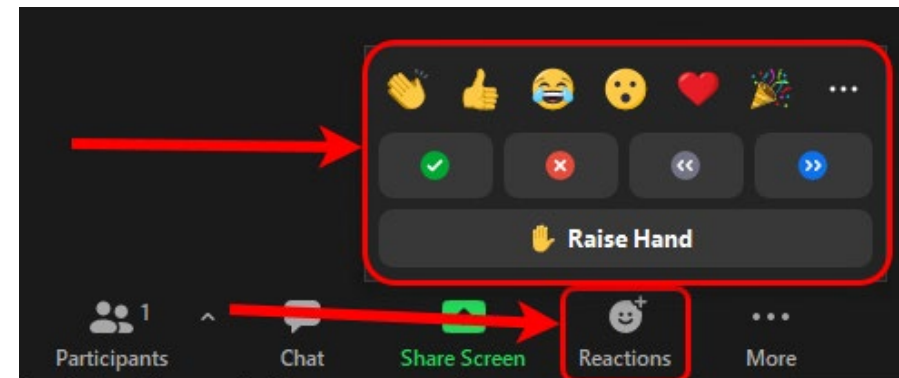
Adjusting to the Diagnosis & Life Changes



- Slides and recordings will be available after the lecture. Watch for notices in monthly email.
- We'll save questions to the end.
- Feel free to add questions to the chat at any time



- After speaker finishes.... you can turn on video and raise actual hand... or raise 'zoom' hand and we'll call on you
- You will need to click on screen to unmute yourself when asked.



Social Engagement

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The screenshot shows the CaringKind website with the header "caringkind The Heart of Alzheimer's Caregiving". Navigation links include ABOUT, ALZHEIMER'S, PROGRAMS, EDUCATION, CAREGIVERS, PROFESSIONALS, PUBLICATIONS, WALK, ATHLETES, and WAYS TO GIVE. Buttons for "EVENTS" and "DONATE" are present. The main content area is titled "Social Engagement with CaringKind" and describes opportunities for social and community activities. It includes a "Community Engagement Calendar" section and three brochure thumbnails: "Family Brochure" (English, En Español, Chinese), "Institution Brochure" (English), and "Connect2Culture" (English, En Español, Chinese).

Social Engagement with CaringKind

CaringKind offers several opportunities for individuals and families to engage in social and community activities. Check out the calendar below for our curated list of monthly offerings by our team and our community partners.

Community Engagement Calendar

This calendar is self-populated by organizations and each submission is reviewed to ensure that it is correct and valid. The programs listed here include our Connect2Culture® partner offerings.

Connect2Culture® creates and promotes engaging non-clinical opportunities for people living with dementia together with their caregivers to stimulate conversation, memories, and connections through shared cultural experiences. These programs include garden walks in botanical gardens, dance workshops, music performances, and gallery talks. Many also encompass interactive activities such as planting, art and music making, and dance/movement that are all related to the exhibition or collection. An initiative to encourage cultural organizations to implement caregiver-only programs is also underway.

Family Brochure
English
En Español
Chinese

Institution Brochure
English

Visit:
caringkind.com/socialengagement



The three cards are: 1. "caringkind connect 2 culture" (top), 2. "Baseball Memories" presented by CaringKind & Cleveland SABR Jack Graney Chapter, featuring a baseball stadium image and text about reminiscing and discussing baseball (middle), and 3. "Virtual connect2cafe" featuring a coffee pot and cups image and text about online social engagement (bottom).

Baseball Memories
Presented by CaringKind & Cleveland SABR Jack Graney Chapter
In-Person and Online SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
Connect2Sports
Reminiscence and discuss baseball
Monthly meetings with lively discussions for one hour, in person or on Zoom, for people with memory loss and their family members or care partners.

Virtual connect2cafe
Online SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
1st Monday of every month • 12:30 - 1:30 PM EST

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Alyssa Parks M.S. OTR/L

Our Speaker

- Therapeutic Specialist at CaringKind
- Occupational Therapist with MS from New York University
- Experience delivering interventions for older adults in community-based settings
- Passionate about promoting safe, healthy aging at home



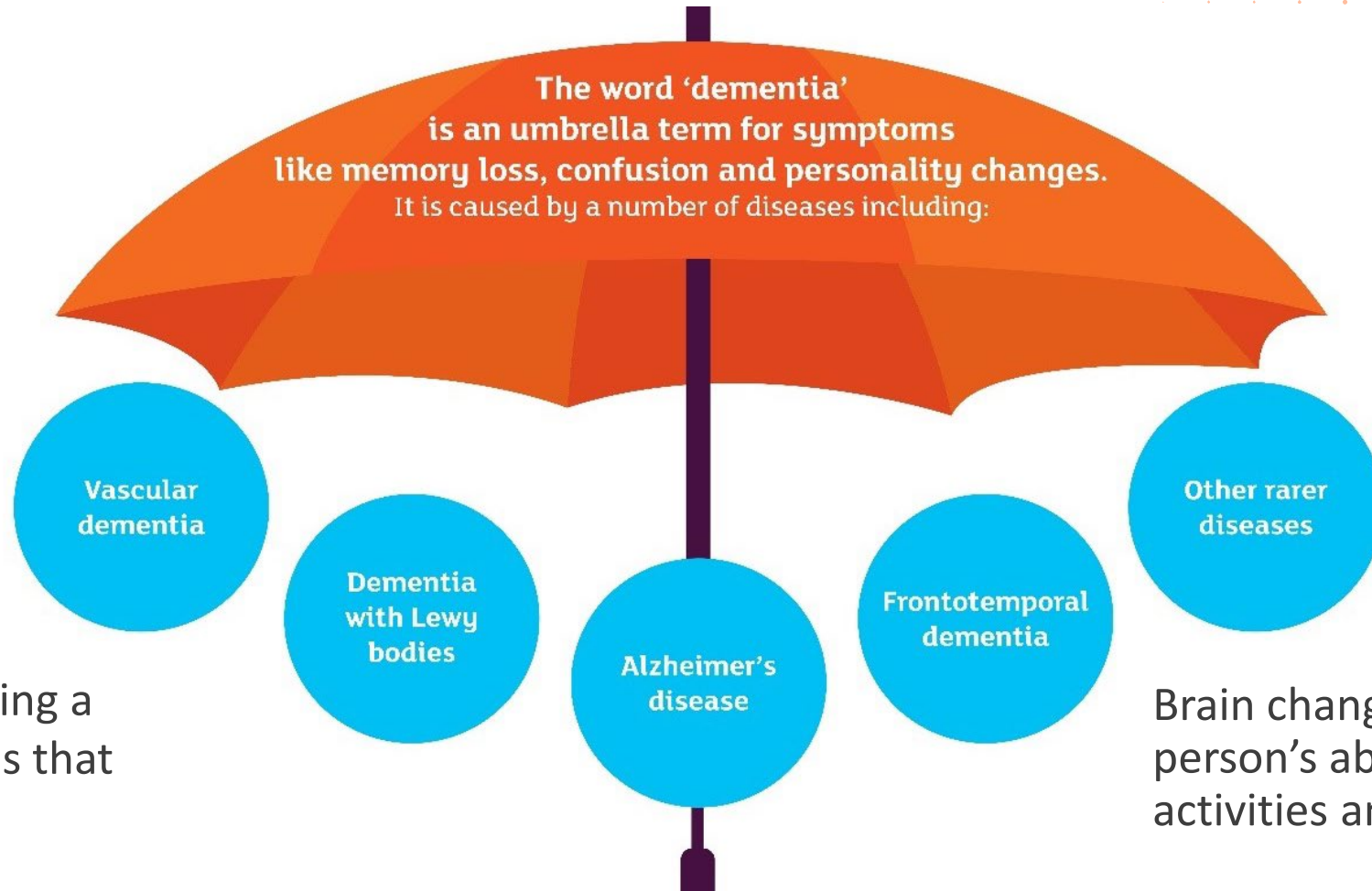
Alyssa Parks, MS, OTR/L
*Therapeutic Specialist,
CaringKind*

Overview

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- I. What Is Dementia?
- II. Dementia Symptoms
- III. What Is Home Safety for PLWD?
- IV. Home Safety & PEO (Person-Environment-Occupation) Model
- V. Person Factors (Risks & Solutions)
- VI. Environmental Factors (Risks & Solutions)
 - I. Physical
 - II. Social
- VII. Activity/Task Factors (Risks & Solutions)
 - I. Dressing Example
- VIII. Case Study
- IX. Questions

What is Dementia?



General term describing a category of conditions that deteriorate the brain

Brain changes impact a person's abilities in daily activities and relationships

Dementia Symptoms

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Memory loss

- Repeating questions, comments

Thinking challenges

- Problems with bills, taxes, remote control, computer

Problems planning & problem solving

- Meal management; not taking care of things properly

Confusion

- Getting facts wrong; mixing up dates, times, etc.

Emotional regulation

- Quick temper; Over-reactions

Apathy

- Not caring about result; dirty clothes, hair

Lack of awareness

- Don't recognize a problem or memory loss

Word finding challenges

- Word substitution

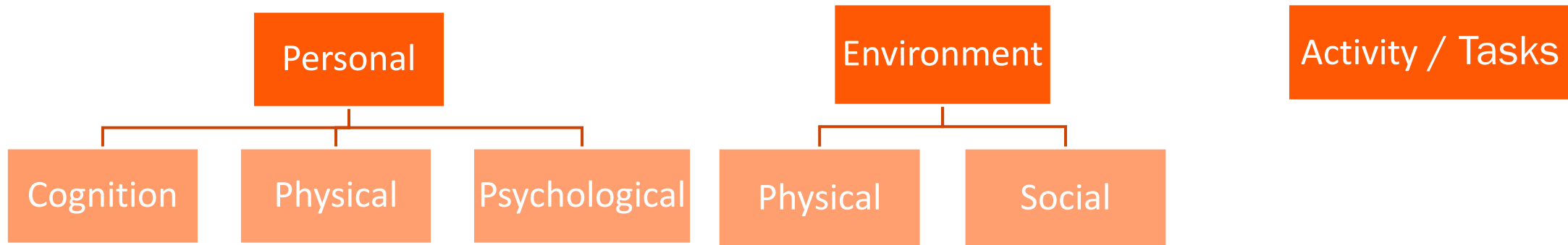
Decreased balance, sensory function

- Trips, dropping things. Eye complaints, new glasses...

What Does Home Safety Look Like for PLWD?

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An environment that facilitates safe and successful participation in activities of daily living (ADLs) for the PLWD over the following domains:

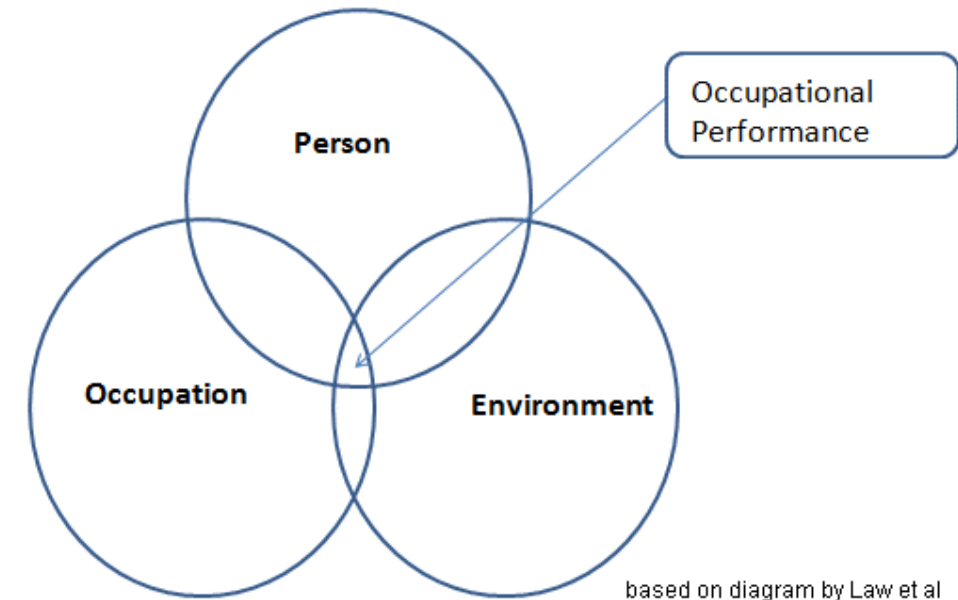


Holistic Home Safety & PEO Model

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- **PEO Model** Law, M., Cooper, B., Strong, S., Stewart, D., Rigby, P., & Letts, L. (1996)
- Person factors (cognition, physical, psychological, roles, interests)
- Environmental factors (physical/social/cultural)
- Occupational factors (activity/task)
- Occupational Performance → interaction between the person, the environment and the occupation
 - Goal: Safe, successful participation in the home

GOAL: SAFE PARTICIPATION IN THE HOME



A Note on Home Safety & Behavioral Challenges

Addressing symptoms of agitation, confusion, and aggression can help people live at home more safely.

- Cognition
 - Orientation (time/place/self/others)
 - Memory
 - Executive functioning → decision making, judgement
- Physical/physiological status
 - Balance
 - Sensory changes (vision, hearing, tactile, interoception = internal body awareness)
 - Chronic condition's: CVA, Diabetes, Hypertension, Osteoarthritis
- Psychological status
 - Depression
 - Anxiety

Assessing Person Factors & Risks

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<u>Person Factors</u>	<u>Associated Risks</u>
Oriented to time/person/place/ self?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting lost or wandering• Increased confusion and agitation
STM: Ex) Remembering to eat or drink water?	Malnutrition and dehydration
Having issues differentiating between hot/cold, or poor depth perception?	Falls, accidental injuries (e.g. burns)
Managing multiple medical comorbidities?	Falls, poor medication adherence
Managing psychiatric comorbidities? Exhibiting signs of depression or anxiety?	Suicidal ideation?

Mitigating Person Factors & Risks: Cognition

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- Cognition
 - Orientation: Smart Clock, Family Photos, Wander Safety Programs, Tracking Technology (Apple Watch, Apple Tag, Tile)
 - STM: Calendar, Smart Phone reminders, Accompaniment



[Amazon.com: Véfaïl 2025 New, Digital Dementia Clock with Date and Time for Elderly, 10 Levels Auto Dimmer, 19 Alarms & Custom Reminders, Sun/Moon Icons, Auto DST, Large Display for Seniors- 7" with Remote : Home & Kitchen](#)



[Relish Day Hub™ - Dementia Reminder Clock](#)

Mitigating Person Factors & Risks: Physical

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- Sensory Changes: Increase contrast between items, set water temperature parameters
- Chronic Medical Conditions: Automated Pill Dispenser, Pain Management, OT/PT



Windtrace:

<https://shorturl.at/AFvHV>



HERO Pill Dispenser:

<https://shorturl.at/AaCkB>

Mitigating Person Factors & Risks: Psychological

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- Psychiatric Conditions: Psych Eval, Psychotherapy, Psychotropic Medication, Physical Activity & Exercise



Geriatric Depression Scale: Short Form

Choose the best answer for how you have felt over the past week:

Question	Answer
1. Are you basically satisfied with your life?	YES / NO
2. Have you dropped many of your activities and interests?	YES / NO
3. Do you feel that your life is empty?	YES / NO
4. Do you often get bored?	YES / NO
5. Are you in good spirits most of the time?	YES / NO
6. Are you afraid that something bad is going to happen to you?	YES / NO
7. Do you feel happy most of the time?	YES / NO
8. Do you often feel helpless?	YES / NO
9. Do you prefer to stay at home, rather than going out and doing new things?	YES / NO
10. Do you feel you have more problems with memory than most?	YES / NO
11. Do you think it is wonderful to be alive now?	YES / NO
12. Do you feel pretty worthless the way you are now?	YES / NO
13. Do you feel full of energy?	YES / NO
14. Do you feel that your situation is hopeless?	YES / NO
15. Do you think that most people are better off than you are?	YES / NO
Score (number of answers in bold)	

Answers in **bold** indicate depression. Score 1 point for each bolded answer.

A score >5 points is suggestive of depression.

A score ≥10 points is almost always indicative of depression.

A score >5 points should warrant a follow-up comprehensive assessment.

FIGURE 1-3 Geriatric Depression Scale: Short Form.
Reprinted from Sheikh JJ, Yesavage JA, Clin Gerontol.³¹

- **Physical Environment**

- Entrances/Exits
- Bedroom
- Kitchen & Dining Area
- Bathroom
- Laundry Room
- Basement



Assessing Environmental Risks: Physical Environment

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<u>Physical Environment Factors</u>	<u>Associated Risks</u>
Clutter?	Falls
Loose rugs?	Falls
Weapons?	Accidental self-injury or injury to others
Accessible sharps?	Accidental self-injury or injury to others
Poor lighting?	Falls
Stairs?	Falls
Outerwear by the exit?	Getting lost and wandering
Easily accessible door locks?	Getting lost and wandering
Disorganized and loose medication?	Medication mismanagement

Mitigating Physical Environmental Factors & Risks

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- Declutter all functional areas in the home
- Remove loose rugs or secure them to the floor
- Secure any weapons and sharps
- Increase lighting e.g. install motion sensory lighting in walkways and stairs, increase color contrast between areas
- Install stair gates or relocate bedroom to a lower floor if multi-level residence or increase contrasts on stairs or install contrast tape on edge of stairs
- Remove outerwear (e.g. outdoor shoes, coats) from entry/exit areas
- Install door locks that are accessible at the top of the door rather than waist-height
- Secure medication in locked drawers

Door Access Solutions – Smart Locks

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Door Guardian Confounding
Lock: <https://shorturl.at/HReAJ>



Lockly Secure Plus:
<https://shorturl.at/S4f0s>

Stairs Solution – Contrast Tape

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Environmental Factors (cont.)

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- **Social Environment**

- Depth/quality of relationship with PLWD
- Group size
- Auditory stimuli
- Visual stimuli



Assessing Environmental Factors & Risks: Social Environment

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<u>Social Environment Factors</u>	<u>Associated Risks</u>
Familiar or new people? (e.g. family/friends vs. strangers)	Confusion and increased agitation
1:1, small group, large group?	Overwhelm and increased agitation
Level of auditory stimuli? (e.g. loud background music, too many voices)	Overwhelm, increased agitation, aggression
Level of visual stimuli? (e.g. television, flashing lights)	Overwhelm, increased agitation, aggression

Mitigating Social Environmental Factors & Risks

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- New people: Kindly introduce yourself when entering the social space
- Familiar people: Kindly re-introduce yourself if PLWD does not recognize you – explain your association (e.g. son, sister, aunt and etc.)
 - Do NOT demonstrate any anger or disappointment
- Consider the amount of people in the social space – too many may be overwhelming
- Reduce unnecessary auditory and visual stimuli
 - Turn music/TV off or lower the volume to prevent distraction during interactions
 - Limit visual distractions (e.g. clutter, turn off TV, multiple activities occurring in social space)
- NOTE: PWLD can still thrive in a social environment – it's beneficial – BUT important to set up the environment for success

Activity/Task Factors

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- Level of difficulty
 - Planning
 - Sequencing
 - Short Term Memory
- Level of support
- Level of interest
- Familiarity

Assessing Activity/Task Factors & Risks

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Occupation/Task Factors	Associated Risks
Appropriate level of difficulty?	Confusion, agitation, unsuccessful, feelings of defeat
Level of external support (physical, verbal, tactile cues)	Confusion, agitation, unsuccessful, feelings of defeat
Catered to the PLWD interests?	Disengagement, withdrawal
Familiar to the PLWD?	Confusion, agitation, unsuccessful, feelings of defeat

Mitigating Activity/Task Factors & Risks

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- Level of difficulty (planning, sequencing, STM)
 - Downgrade or simplify the task – e.g. dressing
- Level of support
 - Increase external support – person, object or physical structure
- Level of interest
 - Make the task or select a task that is interesting to the PLWD e.g. eating & music
- Familiarity
 - Choose a familiar tasks and adapt it to PLWD strengths e.g. laundry, cleaning, cooking

GOAL: Find the "**just right challenge**" - sweet spot in which task not too easy, not too difficult, and maximizing the use of cognitive function that remains

Task Factors Example: Adapting Dressing to PLWD

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Task: PLWD needs to get dressed for doctor's appointment during the winter

- Task difficulty ↓
 - Present the PLWD with 1-2 options for outfits
- External supports ↑
 - CP's step-by-step verbal cueing
- Level of interest ↑
 - Incorporate a favorite item (e.g. socks/shoes) or favorite music during task



shutterstock.com • 1570822792

Case Study – R.L.

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- Background: R.L. has middle to late-stage dementia, still ambulatory but shuffling gait, resistant to hygiene related tasks and changing clothes, elopement and wandering risk, unstimulating social environment, poor sleep quality, daytime somnolence
 - Person Factors: middle stage dementia, shuffling gait, ambulatory, baseline confused and disoriented, poor sleep quality, daytime somnolence
 - Environment Factors: 1-story apartment, exits at front door and back of kitchen leading to stairs, unstimulating social environment
 - Occupation/task Factors: bathing, dressing, oral hygiene

R.L. – Person-related Risks & Solutions

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- Shuffling gait
- Confused/disoriented cognition
- Poor sleep quality



Falls, elopement and night time wandering

SOLUTION: PT/OT gait and balance training, smart clock, sleep hygiene implementation by CP

- Easily accessible exits in front and back of the apartment
- Outdoor clothes (e.g. coat, shoes) available at front door



Elopement & Wandering

SOLUTION: Rearranging lock to top of the door,
removing outdoor clothes to a more interior closet,

- Showering/dressing/brushing teeth are multi-step tasks and thus too difficult
- Lack of external supports
- Lack of familiarity

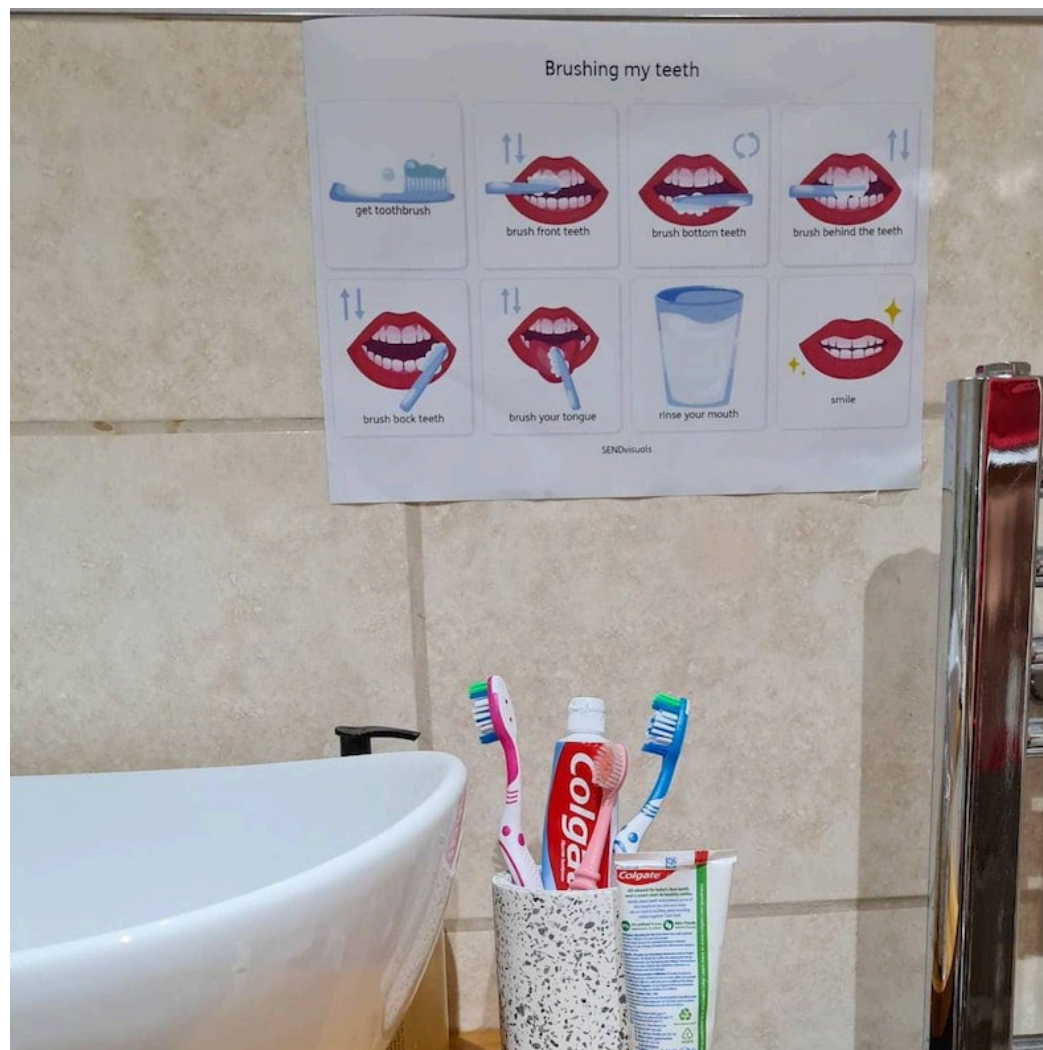


Unsuccessful completion of hygiene tasks
– UTIs, wandering in inappropriate clothing, severe dental issues (e.g. cavities, tooth loss, gum disease, halitosis)

SOLUTION: CP chunking verbal prompts, shower modification, limiting clothes, placing visual step-by-step guide for brushing teeth in bathroom

R.L. Visual Guide: Brushing Teeth

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Caregiver's Role

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- Be aware of person, environment and occupation factors
- Assess each factor and make the necessary adaptations to mitigate risks
- ****Be aware of your own mental and physical health****
 - A CP who is overwhelmed and experiencing burnout can be a safety risk
 - *Respite care*
 - *Prioritizing self-care*
 - *Asking for help from your community*
 - *Seeking support from professional services like CaringKind: Partnering Together support groups, 1:1 REACH coaching*



Talk to a
Navigator

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Questions



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