



Top Ten Unmet Needs of People Living with Dementia



Five Expressions of Emotional Distress

Angry

irritated – angry – furious

Sad

dissatisfied – sad – hopeless

Lonely

solitary – lonely – abandoned/trapped

Scared

anxious – scared – terrified

Bored

disengaged – bored – useless

Five Physical Needs

Intake

hunger or thirst

Energy

tired or revved up

Elimination

need to go or did

Discomfort

temperature or sensations

PAIN!!!

joints, internal or external systems

The Person

Think of the person first and the brain change second. Consider:

- Who they were

Personal history: joys/traumas

Life Roles: professional/family

- Who they are becoming

Preferences: likes/dislikes

Personality traits

Core values

Fitness, Health, Wellness

Remember other health challenges and previous lifestyle choices contribute to the situation. Consider:

- Ability to intake food/fluid
- Medication/supplement side effects
- Emotional/psychological stressors
- Sensory system function/sensitivity
- Personal healthy beliefs/choices
- Recent change: acute illnesses

Brain Change

Dementia is a syndrome, a collection of symptoms.

Consider:

- Diagnosed type(s) of dementia
- Delirium might present as dementia
- Self-awareness of change
- Onset and duration of Symptoms
- Current GEMS™ ability level
- Retained and changed abilities

Stakeholders

All individuals who interact with a person living with dementia (PLWD). Consider their:

- History with PLWD
- Awareness of the *whole* situation
- Knowledge of a changing brain
- Hands on dementia skill training
- Current relationship with PLWD
- Personal Agenda

Environment

Brain change impairs the nervous system and affects experience. Consider the four Fs and Ss of a setting:

- Does it feel **F**riendly and **F**amiliar?
- Is it **F**unctional and **F**orgiving?
- Sharing **S**pace: Am I comfortable with public, personal, and intimate interaction?
- Response to **S**ensation: What happens when I see, feel, hear, smell, or taste something?
- Sensitivity to **S**urfaces: Notice responses to textures I touch, stand, or walk on.
- **S**ocial experiences: As my tolerance changes expectations of me will need modifying

Time

Are days structured and meaningful for a person? Notice if someone is experiencing time differently than you are. Consider these categories of time:

- Productive: offers value and purpose
- Leisure: preferred, fun and playful
- Wellness: gives self-care
- Restorative: calms and recharges
- Waiting: not natural or comfortable
- Where or What: becomes curious about a person's experience of place and time of day