



November 2023

CARE NEWS

Monthly Newsletter of Care in Midstream

Keeping in touch

Eleven months of the year has zipped past, and it is hard to believe that we are already surrounded by Christmas decorations and mulling over festive menus and gift choices.

While December is traditionally a month of celebrations and festivities, it is not always an easy month for everybody. It is the time of the year that the lonely feels lonelier, when many people feel desperately isolated, and when hopelessness abounds. These hard times can be your opportunity to bring happiness and kindness to somebody. It takes very little to reach out – even just a chat on the phone can bring light to a person's day.

We challenge everybody to become Kindness Ambassadors over the next few weeks. Together, we can make a difference!

**Warm regards,
The Care in Midstream Team**



We would love to hear from you. If you have any feedback or news that you would like to share, please contact us at marketing@careinmidstream.co.za



The Ripple Effect of Kindness

There is a theory called the butterfly effect. It describes how the flap of a butterfly's wing can lead to a cyclone in another part of the world. It is a mathematical construct that explains how small changes can have large consequences. So it is with kindness. A single, simple kind act can have enormous consequences.

One person's generosity will spread to three people. Those three people will each pay forward the kind act to three others, benefiting nine in all. Those nine will continue to multiply the kindness. This leads to a ripple effect and subsequent waves of kindness. It is not hard to see how a single act contributes to a kinder, gentler world.

How to Deal with Dying During the Holidays

Dying doesn't disappear during the holidays. For those who know death will come soon but don't know exactly when, the holidays and Festive Season can be particularly unsettling when the air is filled with joy.

The dying person may often face an inner struggle. They may want to be involved in activities but may not have the physical and emotional capacity to deal with the heightened stress and stimulation. Some may prefer to sit quietly and watch proceedings without necessarily being amongst the action but still feel like they are a part of things.

Regardless of the type of life-threatening illness, both the patient and their family members may experience deep distress.



Caring for a loved one who is dying

Be realistic with your expectations. This can be a different and simpler Christmas than others. Allow for spontaneity. Try not to be a martyr and delegate and ask others to help. Doing so enables others to feel included and contribute in special ways.

Listen to the person who is dying. Let them speak if and when they can. Gauge their mood and be guided by them. There is value in being present with the dying person without talking.

Heightened noise and activity, which often go hand in hand with the Festive Season, can create distress for a terminally ill person. Ask family and friends to roster their visits over the different days so as not to tire, overwhelm or stress the dying person.

People can think children don't understand death and can't cope with the concept, so they may protect them by hiding it. But children are tuned to the family's emotional dynamics. They know something is happening, and they need their feelings validated. So, it can be helpful to get children involved in caring for someone dying.

Accept that things can change quite suddenly. Have a backup plan ready. Keep emergency contact details readily on hand always.

When dying is happening at Christmas, it's best to allow all feelings to be expressed rather than simply putting on a brave or smiling face. Feelings are a natural response to suffering and what may be a stressful situation. It's important to remember not to hide your needs and feelings but to speak and communicate with your loved ones.

Care in Midstream provides End of Life and Palliative Care for people living with serious illnesses. Please contact us for more information.

Helping Children Cope with the Death of a Loved One



No matter a child's age, it's important to talk to them about a loved one who is dying or has died. What the child will comprehend depends on their age.

Tips for Communication:

- Use simple, non-medical terms to describe the situation, and ask the child to explain back to you how they understand it.
- Encourage the child to ask questions and try to identify what is behind the question. For example, does the child fear that you may also become ill or die?
- Accept that children often handle grief differently than adults. They may not cry, but rather want to go out and play. They might prefer to draw, or they might act up.
- Reassure the child that they are loved. Let the child know that you and others are sad, too.
- Tell the child what will happen after the loved one dies, so he or she knows what to expect. Describe the funeral and other rituals, explaining why they occur.



If you need something to be grateful for then check your pulse.



Always be THANKFUL for the *Gift of Life.*

REST

Rest goes well beyond the need for good quality sleep, and when you rest all parts of yourselves properly, you will also sleep better and, therefore, feel more replenished and energised.

A well-rested life is a secret hidden in plain sight. It is a life at one with your God, self, and others. It's a life strengthened by winding down the expectations of others and charging up your expectations for yourself. You become in tune with what you need to be at your best.

TYPES OF REST



Physical

Rest the body: sleep, naps, breathing, yoga/stretching, meditation, stillness.



Mental

Rest the mind: regular brain-breaks during your work day, music, silence, journaling.



Emotional

Emotional rest: Expressing emotions, sharing/being witnessed, therapy, journaling, self-care, stopping people-pleasing.



Sensory

Rest the senses: lying down or napping with eye mask and ear plugs, silence, turn off devices, turn down lights.



Spiritual

Spiritual rest: Doing things that provide meaning, meditation, spiritual practice, community.



Social

Social rest: Spending time with supportive people, filling your own battery, nurturing important relationships.



Creative

Creative rest: Making creative spaces, putting beauty around you, being in nature, resting the brain, being childlike, reawaken wonder.

Inspired by Sacred Rest and the work of Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith
www.startwithyou.co

Ageing and Sleep: How Seniors Can Get A Better Night's Rest

The frustration of sleep deprivation or insomnia is common for many, but for seniors, a good night's sleep can be particularly evasive. While changes in sleep patterns are often part of the ageing process, excessive sleeplessness can contribute to serious conditions such as depression or dementia. The good news is that there are strategies that can help older adults sleep more soundly.

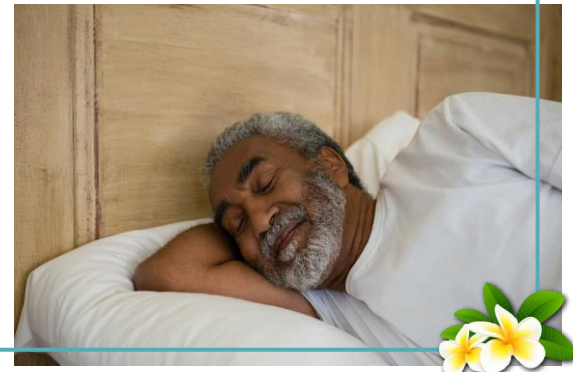
Pay Attention to Diet: Filling your plate with nutrient-rich foods, lean proteins, and heart-healthy fats can improve your sleep. It's also a good idea to stock up on fruits - they contain minerals that help relax your muscles and get you to sleep faster. Before bed, try sipping a warm drink, such as heated milk or (non-caffeinated) tea, to help regulate melatonin production.

Stick to a Routine: Getting into a schedule and a bedtime routine will help your body's natural time-keeping mechanism sync up. By regularly going to bed at the same time, your body will be more ready to head to sleep.

Reduce Your Stress: Having too much on your mind can burden you when you go to bed. If you are too busy, prioritise what's important and delegate if necessary. If stress and anxiety keep you up, try meditating before bed to clear your mind.

Consult Your Doctor: If you continue having difficulty falling or staying asleep, talk to your doctor to rule out any underlying medical conditions. Certain medications can also contribute to sleeplessness, so be sure to check with your doctor about the side effects of medications you may be taking.

Create an Environment for Sleep: Make sure you have a dark and quiet space. Turn off the television to reduce light and sound, and place any pets that might disturb you in another room. And lie down - preferably in a bed rather than curling up on the couch or trying to fall asleep in your reclining chair.



Care in Midstream provides the following services:

Assisted Living | Frail Care | Dementia & Alzheimer's Care | End of Life & Palliative Care
Short Term Care | Home-based Nursing Services



REMINISCENCE THERAPY

What Is Reminiscence Therapy?

Reminiscence therapy uses all the senses to help people with dementia remember events, people, and places from their past. It is also helpful for people with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, as well as other illnesses caused by brain disease. Reminiscence therapy works because it taps into memories repeated and revisited repeatedly over many years. With the right triggers, these memories can be recovered and revisited. Remembering and reminiscing both involve recalling something from the past. However, reminiscing is more about looking back at an experience fondly.

Reminiscence therapy is a non-pharmacological intervention that improves self-esteem and gives seniors a sense of fulfilment and comfort as they look back at their lives.

What Can Reminiscence Therapy Help With?

Reminiscence therapy can improve cognitive processes and ease symptoms across different populations, disorders, and conditions, such as:

- **Reminiscence therapy for dementia:** Brain-based diseases like early-onset dementia can accelerate the process of memory loss and subsequent identity loss in younger people.
- **Reminiscence therapy for depression in older adults:** In various forms, reminiscence therapy can significantly ease depressive symptoms, boost mood, and improve quality of life in older adults.
- **Reminiscence therapy for Parkinson's disease:** People living with Parkinson's can gain from reminiscence activities, especially when combined with mindfulness interventions.

Techniques Used in Reminiscence Therapy

Reminiscence therapy interventions can help someone share thoughts and emotions as they emerge and prompt them to engage in a discussion. It is important to use things that are relevant to the person and that they feel a strong connection to.

- **Visuals** are a powerful way to revisit past experiences and start a conversation. This may include looking at photo albums and watching family movies.
- **Aural** refers to music - another great means to trigger happy memories and build connections. It can entail listening to or singing songs from the person's youth or favourite band.
- **Taste** can be enabled by a therapist, caregiver, or trained professional in various settings. It can entail cooking someone's favourite childhood meal or a relative's recipe and then asking them about what memories come to mind.
- **Tactile** can consist of using items such as an old blanket, jewellery, or piece of clothing so the person can touch it, feel its texture, and then talk about the memories associated with the object.
- **Olfactory:** This refers to using scents that can instantly trigger memories and promote a sense of well-being. For example, having the person smell perfume or scented candles can inspire the person to talk about an anecdote.



Benefits of Reminiscence Therapy

Reminiscence therapy improves mood and some cognitive abilities; enhances well-being and behaviour in patients with dementia; alleviates depression and can have a calming effect; provides a renewed sense of identity; helps alleviate caregiver stress; creates feelings of self-worth, confidence, purpose, and identity; decreases isolation and promotes socialisation.