



A positive approach to dementia care

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One in seven adults has some form of dementia. For some it can be just forgetting a name or misplacing an item here or there. For others it can grow into a debilitating illness that slowly robs someone of what they treasure most—their memories and their sense of dignity.

St. Clare Commons realizes the impact this disease can have on individuals and their families. That is why the St. Clare Commons memory care program nurtures individuals with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of memory impairment using a holistic and person-centered approach to care.

Now St. Clare Commons has added to their memory care program Teeba Snow's Positive Approach™ to Care (PAC). Ms. Snow, a world-renowned occupational therapist and dementia-care consultant, has over 30 years of experience in working with dementia patients and their families. Her extensive experience went into the development of techniques and training models that are used by families and professionals throughout the world. Ms. Snow has been quoted explaining that, "Dementia doesn't rob someone of their dignity, it's our reaction to that that does."

Maggie Kesling, Director of Marketing - Assisted Living and Memory Care for St. Clare Commons and a Certified Dementia Practitioner, agrees. Ms. Kesling has been involved in health care for over ten years and has extensive experience working with dementia residents. She received her training from the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners. She finds that her background and training is especially helpful in assisting families dealing with loved ones with Alzheimer's and dementia. Plus, she appreciates how the St. Clare Commons campus was designed for dementia residents.

"It has a memory garden that allows for walks in the sun and an exclusive dining room and activity center. It is a beautiful area where residents are free to move around but are safe under more intensive personal care and closer supervision. A memory box outside each suite offers a window into the life of the person," she explains. Ms. Kesling shares with families how the campus is conducive to caring for a loved one and how the personalized approach to care helps both the resident and their family.

The new Positive Approach program encourages all to focus on the abilities each dementia person still has, not on what they have lost. The program empowers participants to use their current skills and provides "just the right amount" of assistance when needed.

Jodi Campbell, Director of Assisted Living and Memory Care, received intensive training in the Positive Approach and has been busy teaching and educating her staff.

What makes the Positive Approach different from other dementia programs is that in addition to providing education about dementia, the program goes a step further by teaching how to live in relationship with a changing brain. Ms. Snow's relationship approach and hands-on techniques offer the interpersonal skills needed to improve quality of life for everyone involved—the dementia loved one and their family.

Ms. Kesling agrees, stating, “The program helps everyone, especially the family, understand what is happening in the brain and how to best adapt to what is going on.” She further explains, “There are different types of dementia, more than we can treat just one way. That is why the Positive Approach is good. It is person-centered, geared to the individual because everyone is different.”

St. Clare Commons, as a healing ministry of the Catholic Church, believes that from the individualized memory box by each resident's suite to its personalized care approach, it is important to always maintain one's dignity.

To learn more about the Positive Approach and memory care at St. Clare Commons, contact Ms. Kesling at 419-931-0050 or mkesling@stclarecommons.org.