

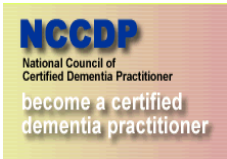


SANDRA STIMSON
Executive Director
[Alternative Solutions in LTC](#)
and
National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners
<http://www.nccdp.org>

ABOUT SANDRA

Sandra Stimson has experience as a corporate consultant, Corporate Trainer and National Speaker. Her experience is in long term care, as Activity Director, Director of Alzheimer's Units and Assistant Administrator of a 550 bed long term care county home. She is Co-founder of Pet Express Pet Therapy Club, is a Life Replay Specialist. Sandra implements dementia units nationwide. Sandra has written several books, Volunteer Management Essentials for Long Term Care and Pet Express Pet Therapy Program. Sandra has been a facilitator for Alzheimer's support groups and is the Awards Chair for the NJ Association of Activity Professionals. Sandra is the Executive Director of **National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners**
<http://www.nccdp.org>.

[Alternative Solutions in Long Term Care](#) offers resources for health care professionals in many areas of dementia care, care plans, Snoezelen products, dementia activity calendars, adult day care calendars, sensory calendars, reminisce videos for dementia, activity books, and dates to remember, party supplies, resources and links.



Each Norman Rockwell print is paired with a national standards of Resident Rights and is illustrated by a picture depicting the "Resident Right."

Pathways to the Past

by Sandra Stimson ADC, CALA, CDP
Executive Director, [Alternative Solutions in Long Term Care](#)

Brain Fog...Is a Legit Diagnosis!

By: Sandra M. Stimson Executive Director



How many times have you heard someone say or you have said, "I must have brain fog, I misplaced my cell phone or car keys?". Have you had ongoing symptoms of feeling hazy, spacey, difficulty processing information, unable to pay attention, cloudy thoughts, poor concentration either sluggish or slow to respond, unable to concentrate, tired, lack of energy, you just don't feel quite yourself, your short term memory and long term memory seem affected?

These same symptoms can mirror other diagnosis such as, depression, mental illness, severe stress and other serious illnesses. Also these symptoms might be side effects due to medications. Always alert your Physician about changes you are noticing. Ask your Physician to perform tests for hormonal levels, thyroid function and blood pressure to rule out medical conditions. Also consider having a screen for food allergies to; sugar, wheat, peanuts and dairy products. If you have not had a complete physical, consider having that done as well.

Some might ask if this is normal aging or Brain Fog? Often times, Brain Fog has been over looked. And the great news is we can do something about it. Brain Fog or the medical term Sjogrens Syndrome is described by the Sjogrens Syndrome Foundation in the following way, "brain fog is a lay term used to describe fluctuating memory loss that is inappropriate for a person's age."

The Sjogrens Syndrome Foundation recommends the following lifestyle changes. This includes but not limited to;

- Minimize stress and anxiety
- Get plenty of sleep of 8 to 10 hours
- Take breaks throughout the day
- Learn relaxation exercises and practice throughout the day
- Limit multi tasking and work on one task at a time.
- Balance work and leisure. Develop a hobby if you don't have one which can be something as simple as reading or learning to play golf.
- Let yourself laugh
- Talk about your feelings
- Set realistic expectations
- Plan ahead
- Reduce caffeine, alcohol and sugar
- Manage pain and joint pain
- Join the support group blog at the Sjogrens Syndrome Foundation
- Seek therapy or a local support group
- Exercise...start by walking five minutes and gradually work your way up
- Boost your brain power by training your brain

Other recommendations to be added to the list but not used exclusively are to take vitamins such as Vitamin D and B 12, supplements, eat more foods high in antioxidants such as prunes, raisins, blackberries, kale, spinach, strawberries, dark green vegetables, eat fish, nuts (some people swear by Brazil Nuts, Almonds and Walnuts), add fiber. Add foods rich in Folic Acids such as cooked spinach. Avoid "bad" fat which studies are now showing that it stunts the growth of brain cells. Instead switch to olive oil and non saturated fat. Eliminate coffee, sugar and junk food until you feel better. Eat less and don't eat when you are not hungry. There are some studies that suggest rats that were fed a calorie restricted diet had more brain power. Get outside everyday and increase your exposure to fresh air and sun light.

"Add more brain foods to your diet such as Avocados, bananas, lean beef, brewer's yeast, broccoli, brown rice, Brussels sprouts, cantaloupe, cheese, chicken, collard greens, eggs, flaxseed oil, legumes, oatmeal, oranges, peanut butter, peas, potatoes, romaine lettuce, salmon, soybeans, spinach, tuna, turkey, wheat germ, and yogurt." Source www.mindpowernews.com

So how can we boost our brain power? Some suggestions are; learn a new skill, if you are retired get a part time job, engage in socially and mentally stimulating activities (such as a book club), establish new friends and relationships, join a gym or Spa and actually go. Incorporate daily brain fitness games. You heard the phrase "use it or lose it." The brain fitness games can be something you do for a few minutes.

Make use of brain games that are found in the local paper, online, book stores, the checkout line at the grocery store. These include but are not limited to Cross Word Puzzles, Word Games, Riddles, Trivia and Math Games. Read a book or begin a journal and write in it every day. Other examples of brain fitness games are scrabble and chess. At ALZINFO they have free online brain games at <http://www.alzinfo.org/alztalk/games.php>.

There are new software's applications that are available such as Dakim. " Dakim Brain Fitness Software cross-trains the brain in all six cognitive domains, including long-term

ACTIVITY DIRECTOR TODAY E-MAGAZINE
Be sure to subscribe to Activity Director Today E-magazine for the latest news and more about your profession. Only \$19.95/year

ACTIVITY DIRECTOR COMMUNITY
Join our [Activity Director Community](#) message Activity Professionals across the country. This is a free service.


[Activity Director Books.](#)
Excellent Resources for Activity Professionals



Featuring supplies for parties, holiday celebrations and special events
[Click Here](#)

RESIDENT SHOPPING & MORE
At [Resident Shopping & More](#) you will find clothing and more for your residents. Also, you will find Activity Department supplies.

ACTIVITY DIRECTOR NOVELTIES
[Activity Director Novelties](#) features and gifts for you, your residents, your facility and your Department. Be sure to visit.



Books, Videos, and Resources for the Activity Departments



memory, short-term memory, language, computation, visuospatial orientation and critical thinking to give you a comprehensive brain fitness workout to help keep your mind vital and healthy.” Source The Marble Store

Other suggestions are listening to classical music. Some people also use Aroma Therapy and swear by Rosemary and that when you inhale Rosemary, it may wake up your brain. Watch for scientific studies on this.

Innovative Cognitive Wellness Services such as Dynamic Senior Solutions out of Ohio provide services for all ages to deal with the different facets of brain fitness and wellness through assessments, scientifically developed programs, support systems, and innovative cognitive exercises. Dynamic Senior Solutions uses a variety of programs and software called My Vigorous Mind. The software that helps people who suffer from cognition issues and helps with reasoning, language, processing speed, sequencing and memory. The client purchases a subscription to the software and it can either be utilized in the facility, home or at the Dynamic Senior Solutions Office. Tammy McVicker Vice President of Dynamic Senior Solutions recommends, “that clients use the software at minimum three times a week with sessions lasting 30 to 60 minutes for improvement in cognition for people who are at risk for dementia or newly diagnosed with dementia.” If you are interested in having this service in your facility, contact Dynamic Senior Solutions. If you are a member of the NCCDP, they offer discounted rates for our members. <http://www.dynamicseniorsolutions.com/>

Stress can only add to Brain Fog. There is good stress and bad stress and all of it is stressful. Other than the obvious stresses related to illness, family dynamics, loss of job or home, the one stress that is common to many of us is income. Take the time to visit the new OWN, Oprah Winfrey Network Dr. Phil Show on Frugal Living Tips, where he addressed helpful tips on stretching your dollar. We can all use a little more wealth! Just by using coupons you can literally cut your grocery bill in half. You than can use that savings to begin investing in your future. The more you save the better you will feel which can affect your quality of life.

Really examine the things that are causing you the most stress and see what changes you can implement to make this a more enjoyable year.

“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting different results.” Albert Einstein . So start by making a Brain Power plan for your life changes, get educated about Brain Fog, create new habits and pay a visit to your doctor . This does not have to be a life long illness and you literally are in charge of reversing Brain Fog.

Resources for Brain Fog or Sjogrens Syndrome

Sjogrens Syndrome Foundation has a great fact sheet to download at http://www.sjogrens.org/files/brochures/brain_fog.pdf
Brain Fog Blog <http://www.brainfogblog.com/>
Brain Fog <http://www.brainfog.net/>
Marbles The Brain Store Has all kinds of books and games and software such as Dakim <http://www.marblesthebrainstore.com/>
70 Ways to Increase Your Brain Power <http://www.mindpowernews.com/BrainPower.htm>
Book: The Memory Bible available at www.sjogrens.org
OWN Network Oprah Winfrey Network-Dr. Phil Show on Frugal Shopping <http://www.drphil.com/shows/show/1232/>
Frugal Coupon Living <http://www.frugalcouponliving.com/>

ACTIVITY DIRECTOR TODAY

*Providing Internet Resources
for Activity Professionals
in Long Term Care Settings*
admin@theactivitydirectorsoffice.com

**Copyright 2004-Present
The Activity Director's Office
All Rights Reserved**

[Disclaimer](#)

