

The Montessori Method in Dementia Care

- Creating an environment specific to the person
- Ensure progression from activities that are simple to complex and concrete to abstract
- Separate an activity into smaller parts - provide training on one element at a time
- Provide sequential learning – individuals with dementia progress through stages by **observation** and **recognition**, ultimately followed by **recall** and **demonstration**
- Utilize tangible, functional, and aesthetically pleasing materials that are from real life
- Use of activities that emphasize auditory, visual, and tactile discrimination – **multi-sensorial**

12 Principles in Montessori for Dementia

1. The activity should have a sense of purpose - capture the customer's interest
2. Invite the customer to participate
3. Offer choice whenever possible
4. Talk less - demonstrate more
5. Physical skills - focus on what the person CAN do
6. Match your speed to theirs - slow down
7. Use visual hints, cues, or templates
8. Give the person something to hold
9. Go from simple to complex
10. Break a task down into steps
11. To end, ask: 'Did you enjoy doing this?' and 'Would you like to do this again?'
12. There is no right and wrong - think engagement!

General Method of Working with a Person and Montessori Materials

- Greet the person by name
- Explain you would like to spend some time
- Offer a choice or “I would like to show you something”
- Name the materials
- Demonstrate
- Ask the person to take a turn
- Repeat
- Thank the person
- Pick another

**Develop
Template
for Each
Activity**

Tone Bars

Purpose:

- Sensory skills (Auditory discrimination)

Materials:

- Eight color-coded tone bars (an octave beginning and ending in 'C')
- Eight mallets
- (Optional) Color-coded music sheets

Procedure:

1. This activity has two main procedures. The first one involves engaging in a music-playing activity with multiple residents. Multiple players are not necessarily needed, but it is suggested as a group activity.
 - a. With multiple players, distribute the tone bars among them, making sure everyone has a mallet. The number of bars and the colors distributed doesn't matter.
 - b. Identify what notes and colors each player has.
 - c. Using a color-coded music sheet, call out the notes/colors of the song and have each resident pound on their respective tone bar(s) when their color/note name appears on the sheet.
2. The second activity can also be done with multiple players, but can also be done one on one.
 - a. Lay the Tone Bars out in a non-sequential order.
 - b. One by one, use a mallet to pound the bars. Identify which bar has the lowest pitch, and set it aside.
 - c. Repeat this process - finding the lowest of the remaining bars until they are all categorized.

Extensions:

- Play songs by using color-coded music sheets.
- Identify pitches from lowest to highest.

Color Meanings



Source: <https://www.color-meanings.com>

Best practices for engaging patients with dementia

The Montessori method structures the environment and learning in an individualized way. Some principles include:

- observing the individual to determine needs and interests
- respecting and encouraging an absorbent mind
- allowing freedom to explore within a safe environment in a positive manner (where independence and self-directed learning are important)
- providing opportunities for hands-on education whenever possible for learning abstract concepts and engaging with the environment
- emphasizing practical life activities that promote sensory stimulation, control of movement, concentration, and coordination
- providing choices in the selection of activities with the ability to repeat the action as often as needed
- developing a sense of satisfaction for work well done without interruption, competition, tests, rewards, or punishments
- creating an orderly and attractive work environment
- demonstrating how to do activities before assuming an individual knows the appropriate behavior
- isolating qualities of an activity (for example, separating the element of shape from color, if shape is the focus of the activity).

Helpful Resources

<https://www.hillcresthealth.com/dementia-programming/>

- Understanding Mental Health
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Understanding Parkinson's Disease
- Behavioral Health Care
- Understanding Brain Trauma
- Ounce of Prevention
- Defining the 3 D's: Dementia, Delirium, & Depression
- Alzheimer's, Down Syndrome, & Other Disorders
- Clinical Research & Trials
- Understanding the Brain & Behaviors
- Approaches in Elder & Dementia Care
- Dementia Types & Diagnosis
- Rural Health in Aging Populations
- Eldercare and Dementia
- The Caregiver
- A Holistic Approach to Care
- The Dementia Journey
- Living with Dementia

<https://www.wowt.com/news/now-what/>

- Brain Health
- Mental Health Connections
- Mental and Behavioral Health

<https://www.zivli.com/blog/dementia-caregiver-tips-dr-anna-fisher>

Educational Programs

