

CARE Compass

Helping Navigate the Later Stages of Dementia



Arboretum Tour

 Sanders-Brown
Center on Aging

This project was made possible by a generous gift.

The goal of the program is to help provide tools and information so that you can navigate the later stages of dementia. We hope that you find these videos and resources to be helpful and encouraging.

This program is designed to be a guide only for the compassionate care and support of your loved one and is not medical advice. If you have questions or concerns, always check with your doctor.

We also want to acknowledge that late-stage dementia can look very different from person to person. Sometimes the ideas we share may not work or work for a short time. That is okay. No one person is alike, and what works today may not work tomorrow. We hope to provide tools that can be options for you to try.

This guide contains links and other resources that may not be provided by the presenter but are added to the guide to provide additional information and support.

Today, we invite you and your care partner to join us on a peaceful journey through the arboretum. A place filled with beauty, color, and the calming presence of nature.

As dementia progresses, words and memories may become more difficult to access. Yet the ability to experience joy, comfort, wonder, and connection often remains. The sights, sounds, scents, and textures of nature can provide moments of calm, engagement, and meaning.

For caregivers, this experience offers an opportunity to slow down, connect, and share meaningful moments together.

As we explore the gardens, trees, and seasonal landscapes, take your time. Pause when you wish. Notice the colors, the movement of the leaves, and the beauty that surrounds us.

Below are some prompts for discussion: Remember, you can ask these prompts and then respond to yourself or wait until your loved one is able to respond.

Connection Prompts for Caregivers:

I really like that flower. What do you think about it?

That tree reminds me of our walks together.

Wouldn't it be nice to sit there and listen to the birds?

Let's see what we can discover together.

I enjoy spending this time with you.

Look at those beautiful purple flowers.

The trees are moving gently in the breeze.

This garden looks peaceful today.

I loved buying [favorite flower] for you.

Lavendar is one of my favorite smells.

Remember, you can view this episode together or allow your loved one to watch it on their own. If this is an activity you do with your loved one, the goal is not conversation, it is connection. Sitting quietly together, holding hands, observing nature and sharing the experience can be just as meaningful as words. By slowing down and paying attention to your loved one's reactions, you may discover that they are still communicating in ways that go beyond language.

Useful Websites:

The website below is the American Horticultural Society Garden Network that has over 400 gardens in North America to explore.

<https://ahsgardening.org/ahs-garden-network/>

The link below is the U.S. National Arboretum

<https://www.usna.usda.gov/>

To check and see if a garden destination is wheelchair or walker friendly, the link below can help.

<https://wheelmap.org/>