

CARE Compass

Helping Navigate the Later Stages of Dementia



Summer Excitement

 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.

Welcome to our summertime journey.

Summer is a season filled with sunshine, blooming flowers, gentle breezes, and memories spent of days outdoors with family and friends. As we watch together, there is no need to remember names, dates, or specific events.

Instead, enjoy the sights, sounds, and feelings that summer can bring.

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, animals, the movement of the leaves, and the beauty that surrounds us.

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

Connection Prompts for Caregivers:

“Summer days are spent in the sunshine.”

“Remember when we would go to in summertime (e.g. the ocean, amusement park, visit relatives etc.).

“Fresh watermelon always feels like summertime.”

“Gardens are so colorful in the summer.”

“You have always loved the smell of fresh tomatoes.”

“I always loved sitting on the porch swing in the summer with you.”

“In the summer, we used to have ice cream for dinner!”

“You used to take us to the county fair every summer.”

“The fourth of July parade is something we always looked forward to.”

“Remember that big fish you caught out on the lake.”

“We loved to take the boat out in summer.”

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:

For more relaxing videos Ithaca College has a website for your enjoyment

<https://www.ithaca.edu/mental-health-flock/stop-and-breathe/visual-relaxation-videos>

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

<https://wheelmap.org/>

Hot weather safety for older adults

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/safety/hot-weather-safety-older-adults>