



# Top Ten Unmet Needs of People Living with Dementia



## Five Expressions of Emotional Distress

### **Angry**

irritated – angry – furious

### **Sad**

dissatisfied – sad – hopeless

### **Lonely**

solitary – lonely – abandoned/trapped

### **Scared**

anxious – scared – terrified

### **Bored**

disengaged – bored – useless

## Five Physical Needs

### **Intake**

hunger or thirst

### **Energy**

tired or revved up

### **Elimination**

need to go or did

### **Discomfort**

temperature or sensations

### **PAIN!!!**

joints, internal or external systems

## The Person

Think of the person first and the brain change second. Consider:

- Who they were

Personal history: joys/traumas

Life Roles: professional/family

- Who they are becoming

Preferences: likes/dislikes

Personality traits

Core values

## Fitness, Health, Wellness

Remember other health challenges and previous lifestyle choices contribute to the situation. Consider:

- Ability to intake food/fluid
- Medication/supplement side effects
- Emotional/psychological stressors
- Sensory system function/sensitivity
- Personal healthy beliefs/choices
- Recent change: acute illnesses

## Brain Change

Dementia is a syndrome, a collection of symptoms.

Consider:

- Diagnosed type(s) of dementia
- Delirium might present as dementia
- Self-awareness of change
- Onset and duration of Symptoms
- Current GEMS™ ability level
- Retained and changed abilities

## Stakeholders

All individuals who interact with a person living with dementia (PLWD). Consider their:

- History with PLWD
- Awareness of the *whole* situation
- Knowledge of a changing brain
- Hands on dementia skill training
- Current relationship with PLWD
- Personal Agenda

## Environment

Brain change impairs the nervous system and affects experience. Consider the four Fs and Ss of a setting:

- Does it feel **F**riendly and **F**amiliar?
- Is it **F**unctional and **F**orgiving?
- Sharing **S**pace: Am I comfortable with public, personal, and intimate interaction?
- Response to **S**ensation: What happens when I see, feel, hear, smell, or taste something?
- Sensitivity to **S**urfaces: Notice responses to textures I touch, stand, or walk on.
- **S**ocial experiences: As my tolerance changes expectations of me will need modifying

## Time

Are days structured and meaningful for a person? Notice if someone is experiencing time differently than you are. Consider these categories of time:

- Productive: offers value and purpose
- Leisure: preferred, fun and playful
- Wellness: gives self-care
- Restorative: calms and recharges
- Waiting: not natural or comfortable
- Where or What: becomes curious about a person's experience of place and time of day