

# Supporting Older Adults with ADRD

Presented at the  
3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Aging and Disability Summit  
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## Objectives

- Evaluate supportive decision-making as used with older adults living with dementia.
- Identify aspects of ADRD that require additional planning for effective person-driven decision-making models.
- Recognize social and practical impediments to accepting SDM for adults experiencing dementia.

## Choice is fundamental.



*“I am my choices. I cannot not choose, that is still a choice. If faced with inevitable circumstances, we still choose how we are in those circumstances.”*

*Jean Paul Sartre*

## SDM Essentials

- A person with a **disability** – including changes in memory and cognition
- Selects and empowers supporters.
- Who help the person
- Understand questions, opportunities and options.
- Offer guidance and recommendations
- Help the person make a **choice**
- As needed, help the person carry out that **choice**.

## Person-Centered / Driven



### SDM Starts Here

1. Everyone has the right to make choices.
2. Everyone has the “capacity” to make choices.”
3. As long as a person can communicate in any meaningful way, they have the ability to make choices.
4. People will make good choices for themselves with support.

## Important to Remember

- Adults are allowed to make bad choices.
- The more people are empowered to make choice, the better they are at it.
- Empowering people to make choices improves their quality of life.





So... when one's 77-year-old mother in the early days of her Alzheimer's disease is determined to go mushing at 20 below...

## Enter Dementia

- Dementia – general category term that describes a group of conditions that progressively reduce the brain's ability to function.
- Dementia results from physical changes in the brain, but the effects primarily occur in cognitive functions.
- Biggest risk factor for AD: old age.

## Cognitive Domains

- Memory
- Language
- Attention
- Concentration
- Visual / Spatial Perception
- Planning and Problem Solving
- Abstract Thinking

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## Person-Centered: Not Just Words

While neurological diseases may be the cause of impairment for people living with dementia, there are many other aspects of a person's life that will affect how well they live with dementia.

Thomas Kitwood, (1997)



Personhood



Positive Person Work

## Can we be person-centered in decision-making as well as in care?

- Objections policy makers can expect to hear:
  1. Vulnerable adults will be abused and exploited.
  2. The choices are not “in her best interest”
  3. He asks the same question, over and over.
  4. She forgets the choice that she made.
  5. It is so hard to communicate.
  6. Sooner or later SDM won’t work.

## But consider this...



If supporters, or care partners, are involved early and invest time and in positive person work, is quality of life more or less likely to be good?

## Any Questions?



## Additional Resources

- David Godfrey, Legal Basics: Supported Decision-Making, [justiceinaging.org](http://justiceinaging.org)
- American Bar Association Commission on Law & Aging, [americanbar.org/aging](http://americanbar.org/aging)
- Psychological dimensions of dementia: Putting the person at the centre of care, British Psychological Society Dementia Advisory Group, [www.bps.org](http://www.bps.org) (2016).
- Thomas Kitwood, Dementia Reconsidered (1998).

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