

**Bridging the Gap: How
Compensation Strategies
Unlock Potential:**
Supporting purpose and
engagement in dementia care

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I have no financial disclosures

Goals for Today

- We will explore how compensation strategies can help individuals living with dementia maintain purpose, independence, and engagement in daily life. Instead of focusing on what has been lost, we will highlight how caregivers and professionals can identify remaining strengths and create supportive ways to bridge the gap between ability and challenge.
- Attendees will learn practical, person-centered techniques to adapt environments, routines, and communication in ways that preserve dignity and empower individuals to thrive. The session will demonstrate how small adjustments—like visual cues, structured choices, or meaningful activity planning—can unlock confidence, connection, and fulfillment.
- Ultimately, this presentation reframes dementia care through a strengths-based lens, showing how compensation strategies not only enhance function but also restore a sense of purpose and joy in everyday living.

My Why



“Life is never made unbearable by circumstances,
but only by lack of meaning and purpose.” –
Viktor Frankl

Why Purpose Matters

- Purpose = belonging, identity, contribution
- Meaningful engagement improves emotional well-being
- Care becomes relationship-centered

Strengths Based Care

- Focus on remaining abilities
- Support independence through guided participation
- Meet them where they are
- Set them up for success

What are Compensation Strategies

- Tools and approaches that bridge ability gaps
- Not doing it for them, enabling them to do for themselves

Compensation Methods

- Environmental cues (labels, simplified space)
- Structured routines and predictability
- Clear, supportive communication

Emotional Safety First

- Warm, kind tone and not rushed
- Validation over correction
- Creating a safe environment increases engagement and participation

Supporting Autonomy

- Offer small choices
1-2 options at a time
- Invite Participation
- Tasks do not need to be completed to still have value

Examples of Purposeful Engagement

- Meal prep: sorting, stirring, arranging, gathering items, etc
- Household chores: folding clothes/towels, watering plants, gathering the mail, planting flowers
- Creative expression: watercolor, coloring, making a collage

Adapting Activities

- Break into dementia stage appropriate steps
- Demonstrate visually, depending on their level of ability
- Allot imperfect outcomes

Integrating Purpose into Care

- Include meaning into daily routines
- Use personal history and preferences to guide engagement

Benefits to Increased Engagement

- Reduces resistance to care
- Supports positive relationships
- Enhances caregiver satisfaction

Takeaways

- Purpose is essential to well being
- Compensation strategies unlock ability and dignity
- Small changes create meaningful impact

Questions?

References

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