

Dementia Live® White Paper

DEMENTIALive®

AGE-u-cate Training Institute

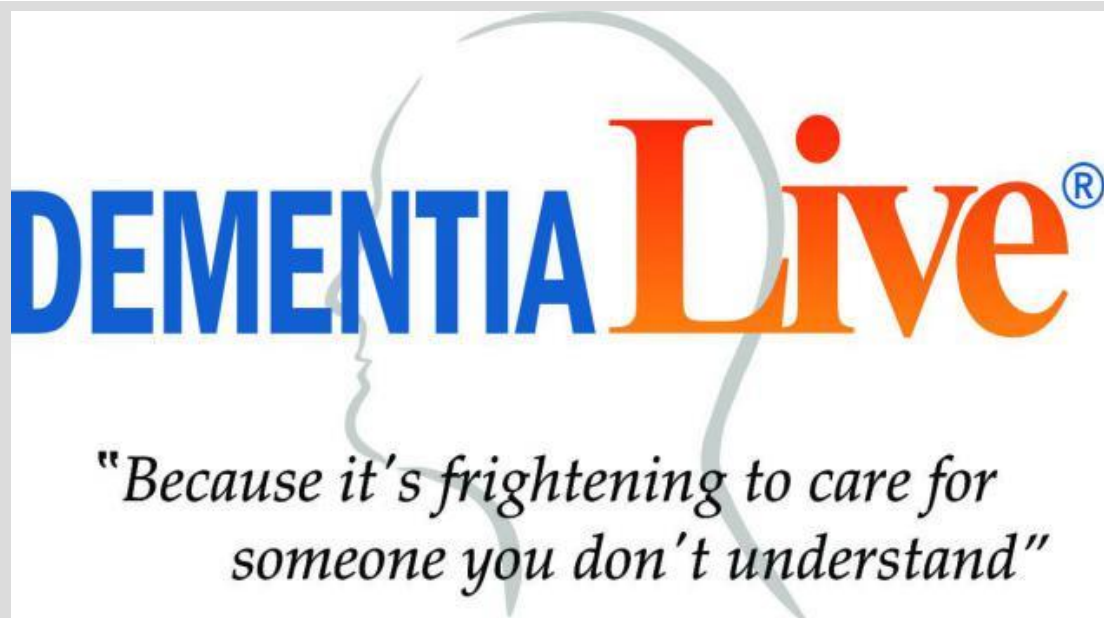
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Introduction

The prevalence of dementia across all aging services continues to grow, yet care partners are often ill-equipped to deal with the day-to-day realities of the difficult job of dementia care.

Providers remain challenged to find solutions to resolve this dilemma.

This paper offers an overview of Dementia Live® as a strategy to develop confident, skilled, and empathic care partners, regardless of the setting. The rationale results from a combination of published research and literature, and professional experience of the professionals who developed the program.



Dementia Skills Gap

Gaps in specific education and training for people caring for persons with dementia exist for all stakeholders across the spectrum of aging services.

Percent of formal aging service users with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias:

- Assisted living >50%
- Nursing home 47.8%
- Hospice 44.5%
- Community service agencies 44%
- Residential care community 41.9%
- Home health 32.3%
- Adult day center 30.9%



We must not overlook the 15 million family caregivers who may lack the necessary education and support to manage the burden of ongoing care.

The Workforce Development Workgroup of the National Research Summit on Dementia Care identified the following gaps in workforce development:

- Workforce education and training in dementia care
- Recruitment and retention of a dementia-capable workforce
- The translation and implementation of effective dementia care

A dementia-capable care team helps ensure higher positive outcomes in quality of life and care of persons living with dementia and their families and workforce job satisfaction.



From Issue to Action

To elevate dementia care practices, care partners must first understand dementia and how persons with dementia feel challenged with cognitive and sensory changes. Dementia Live[®] simulates cognitive and sensory impairment, giving participants first-hand experience of living with dementia.

Participants grasp the constant struggles affecting persons with dementia as they go about their daily lives.

Greater understanding leads to more empathic care-partnering.

Impacts of Skill Gaps

Dementia Skills Gap Consequences:

The Provider Impact:

- Inability to retain a stable workforce
- The financial toll of high turnover
- Low staff morale
- Negative regulatory outcomes
- Absenteeism
- Low customer satisfaction
- Increased psychotropic medication use

Formal Caregivers:

- Overwhelming demands on the body, mind, and emotions
- Safety concerns
- Fear
- Fatigue
- Job burnout

Family Caregivers:

- Physical, emotional, mental exhaustion
- Unsafe home environment
- Erosion of relationships
- Social isolation
- Depression
- Financial stress
- Low trust in the Provider's quality of care

The People Impact:

Care Receivers:

- Misunderstood
- Ill-being
- Behaviors expressing unmet needs
- Negative interactions
- Safety risks
- Feeling insecure
- Anxiety and depression

Solution

Dementia Live® provides an inside-out understanding of dementia and the foundation for building other best care practices.



The Dementia Live Process:

- **Preparation and Simulation Gear-** Participants are outfitted in gear needed to simulate typical age and dementia-related vision, auditory, and tactile sensory changes.
- **Task List-** Each participant performs a list of standardized typical daily tasks, such as hanging clothing or counting coins.
- **Experience Room-** Participants perform tasks in a space set up to replicate the living environment.
- **Observation-** The facilitator observes and records participants' approach to the tasks and reactionary behaviors.

The simulation triggers similar well-documented physical, vocal, and emotional behaviors of people with dementia when faced with challenging tasks or environments, such as:

- Attempts to leave
- Gives up, "shuts down"
- Becomes angry

Empowerment Session

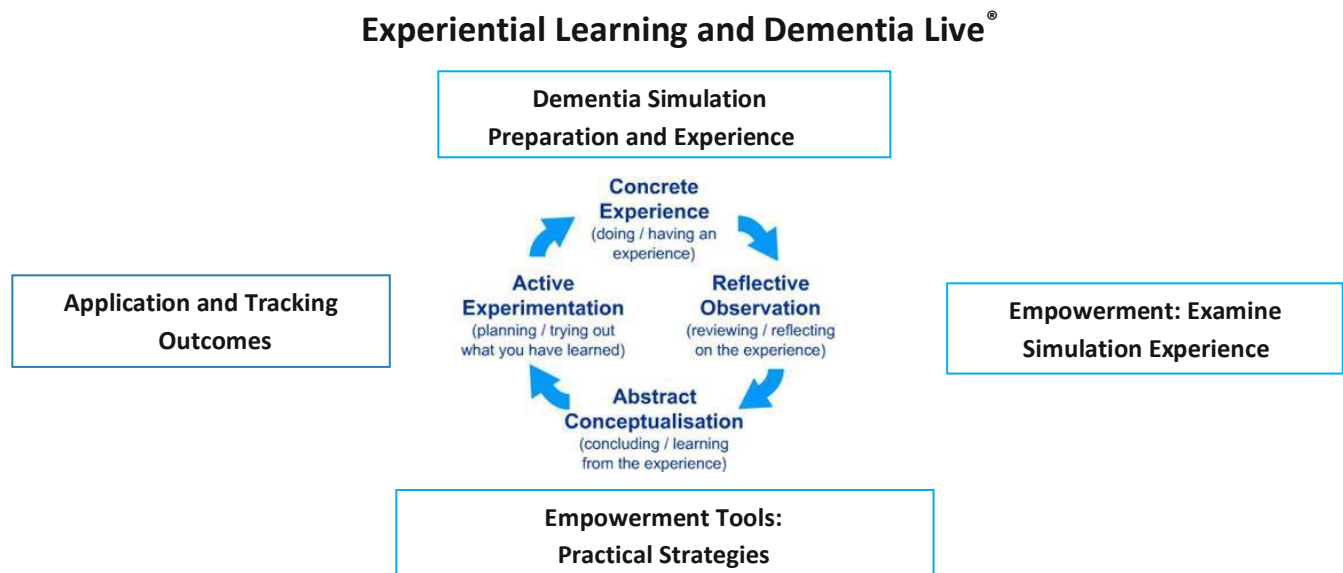
Participants examine their reaction to the dementia simulation, reflecting on feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. They compare how people living with dementia may feel, think, and act in the presence of diminished sensory and cognitive function.

Care partners are then empowered with practical tools to create a dementia-friendly environment, aid communication, and build positive care partner relationships.

The Power of Experiential and Microlearning

The developers of Dementia Live® believe that contemporary learning methods suited for the modern learner change knowledge, attitudes, or action. These strategies guided the program's development.

Experiential Learning places the learner directly in touch with realities, learning by doing. It is a cycle where one experiences, reflects, thinks, and acts on new ideas.



Microlearning breaks up content that is relevant and easier to remember.

Dementia Live's Empowerment Tools are tailored to specific caregiver needs and presented in short, manageable pieces.

Inspiring Empathetic Care

Empathy is being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes for a while so you can imagine what they are going through, leading to a deeper understanding of their feelings and behaviors.

Dementia Live cultivates empathy, a personal quality, and an acquired skill that every care-partner can learn and express.



Empathetic care is associated with:

- Improved care-receiver and provider satisfaction scores
- Positive outcomes
- Staff retention
- Enhanced well-being
- Improved communication and relationships with families
- Strong provider reputation
- Improved quality of life and care

When care team members act with empathy, they carry it out as:

1. Going beyond expected job duties
2. Emotional engagement
3. Rich relationships

Dementia Live inspires care-partners to feel, think, and act in ways that create a compassionate, respectful atmosphere to live, work, and visit.

What Can Dementia Live Achieve?

By temporarily and safely immersing participants in the life of dementia, we begin to change their existing attitudes about dementia, which opens the door to deepening their understanding and improving their actions of care.

Dementia Live provides a tangible, real-life experience leading to understanding the complexities of the disease.

When people are engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, soulfully, and physically, we can begin the dementia-capable care journey. **That is the power of Dementia Live.**



About the Authors

Ann Catlin, OTR, LMT, brings 40 years' experience as a clinician and educator in the fields of geriatric occupational and massage therapies to the AGE-u-cate team, where she develops and delivers training programs.

Julie Boggess, LNHA, CDP, worked in Aging Services operations for 32 years before joining AGE-u-cate. She has been a licensed administrator since 1990 and teaches courses in Aging and Leadership at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL.

What Next?

For more information on AGE-u-cate including Dementia Live®, our other programs and our newest offering, REVEAL Aging Training Courses, please visit www.ageucate.com



References available upon request.