Effective Care Practices
Person Centre Care, Support & Training for
formal & informal carers in the
Singapore context

The challenge of Language in Effective
Communication / Caregiving for people
with dementia in the Singapore context

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### Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prevalence of Dementia in Singapore, aged above 65</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>53,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>187,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Services for Dementia in Singapore

• Singapore is the world’s 3rd fastest aging nation, meaning a rapid increase in the dementia persons.

• Limited service providers for an increasingly number of people with dementia in the community.

• Other services that have a mixed group of normal and dementia elderly can be found in Hospitals, Nursing Homes and some Social Day Care Centres.
About Singapore

- Singapore is also a multiracial society. There are four official languages in Singapore: English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil.
About some aged Singaporeans

• The last generations of Singaporeans were immigrants from China, India, and Peninsular Malaysia; speaking mainly Chinese dialects (eg Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hainanese and Hakka), Indian dialects (eg Tamil) and Malay.

• They are getting old and some may suffer from dementia.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Chinese dialects</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore_English
Communication Disorder in Dementia

One of the symptoms in dementia person is the inability to speak in coherent sentences or understand verbal communication.

Language has inevitably become a common and major challenge in effective communication between the caregivers and the dementia person.
Challenges in caring for dementia persons

(1) In Singapore, double income has become a culture to raise families.

The younger generations are educated in English, and also learn their respective mother tongues. Many do not speak dialects as the use of these was not encouraged.
(2) Many middle class Singaporean households employ a foreign domestic helper to work as stay-in maid to care for the elderly, besides household chores.
(3) Housing in Singapore: Due to the structure of housing, grown-up children got married and stay away. Very often, only left the maid and the dementia person living together.

(4) Maid is a significant part of dementia care, a major challenge is the impaired communication between the maids and the dementia persons of different language, race, and cultured.

These foreign maids are mainly from countries like Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.
(5) Lack of effective communication may develop inappropriate behaviour in caring for the dementia persons.
Such challenge of language would also affect the care professionals in care institutions such as Day Centres, Nursing Homes and Hospital for dementia persons.
Strategies to effective communication

* Training will help both family caregivers and maids to better understand the dementia condition and to establish rapport to meet the needs of the dementia person.

* Maids are encouraged to attend the required language classes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenging Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helper shared that Mdm Ng refused to put on clothes to sleep. Madam Ng denied. I asked her if naked, what will happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mdm Ng was able to respond that it is “not nice” when naked, will cough, will have runny nose, will be uncomfortable. She was able to comprehend the consequences of “naked”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught helper to repeat few times (even reminded by Mdm Ng at times) in Cantonese: “if don’t wear clothes, not nice, will feel cold, will cough, will have runny nose, feel difficult”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(to review its outcome next week)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schemes funded by Singapore Government

(1) Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) Grant

http://www.cel.sg/Schemes__Foreign-Domestic-Worker-FDW-Grant_.aspx

(2) Caregiver Training Grants

Thank You!
References

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