The Evolution of Dementia Care from Person-Centred to Relationship-Centred Care: How True Care Partnerships Enhance Quality of Life for All

Virginia Bell, MSW and David Troxel, MPH
Goals of Presentation

• Reflections on how our approach to dementia care has changed during the last 30 years.

• Discussion of how we best support persons with dementia today as care partners including work we’ve developed – the Best Friends Approach

• Share some encouraging trends.
Evolution of dementia care

1980’s -

- Person centred care
- Person directed care
- Relationship centered care
Past, Present & Future

Lack of awareness/stigma

Explosion in interest, awareness, services, focus on therapeutic environments

Dementia friendly communities
Reflections

• An effective medical treatment or cure still seems illusive.
Reflections

• We know how to do quality dementia care
• Supporting human rights and dignity
• Family and professional care partners who understand the basics
• Good medical supervision
• Creating a therapeutic environment, an environment that’s healing
Reflections

• We know how to do quality dementia care

• Supporting human rights

Bell & Troxel,
Dementia Bill of Rights Revised (2016)
Best Friends

- Based upon *The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer’s Care*, published in 1996 (Virginia Bell & David Troxel).
- Focuses on the power of relationship based care, communication, activity and engagement to support quality of life for persons with dementia.
Quality Memory Care

Creative activities
  Conversation
Using the Life Story
  Exercise
Music

Purposeful chores
  Learning & growth
Laughter
Animals
Being outside
Contemporary Programs embrace Relationship Centered Care

- Current language a great step forward in the 1980’s and 1990’s
- We moved from the task to “person centered care”
- Today we have taken another stop forward
- From person centered care we should now look at “Relationship centered care”
We know it’s not always 50/50 but a care partnership implies:

• Equality and support of basic human rights

• Respect

• Encouragement of independence ("doing with instead of doing for")

• Focus on remaining strengths vs. losses.

• The imperative that providers be dementia trained and capable.
Changing the experience

Auguste Deter

Harry Nelson
The Best Friends™ Approach

New Edition Coming!