Mindfulness and greater ease in providing dementia care

Mindfulness-based dementia care can empower you to be a better, more relaxed, and confident dementia caregiver in a number of ways:

1. **Bringing a calm, centered presence**
With regular mindfulness practice, you will find that you are automatically more calm and centered, including during your care interactions. Calmness is one of the greatest gifts you can bring to the person in your care.

2. **Not being limited by expectations or wishes**
Mindfulness teaches us to stay in the present moment, and to not let our mind wander in the past or the future. You will find yourself less likely to dwell in stressful mind states, and more open to what each new moment brings.

3. ‘**Being’ vs. task-only driven**
Many of the dementia behaviors arise when we rush to perform a task with the person without first checking where the person is in that moment. Mindfulness helps shift from a task-driven mode to a state of being with the other person. This results in the person feeling recognized and being more likely to respond positively.

4. **Responding, not reacting**
In the heat of a difficult interaction, we run the risk of reacting and of making matters worse. Mindfulness practice trains us to naturally take the time to pause before making an appropriate response. This way we are more likely to de-escalate and transform interactions for the better.

5. **Being aware of the person**
In our habitual rush to get things done, or out of habit, we may miss new cues about the person’s mental and physical state. This is especially important whenever verbal communication is impaired. With mindfulness, you will be more prone to noticing nonverbal signals.

6. **Being aware of the environment**
Mindfulness teaches us to be more aware of our environment, which also happens to be that of the person with dementia. You will learn to use sensory awareness to better anticipate environmental stressors and to make appropriate changes in the person’s environment.

7. **Being fully attuned**
Mindfulness practice helps us become comfortable with dropping below our habitual mode of discursive thinking and verbal communication. We learn different ways of connecting and signaling to the person that we are attuned to their present state. That skill becomes critical when the person with dementia is no longer able to speak or make sense when they talk.

[www.presencecareproject.com](http://www.presencecareproject.com)
Mindfulness-based Dementia Care

First model created by Marguerite Manteau-Rao, MBDC. Implemented in 2013 – California. 6 weeks + workbook.

Redesigned and shared nationally by Laura Rice-Oeschger, LMSW & Ymkje Dioquino, LMFT as an 8 week program + workbook. Listed in the Family Caregiving Alliance, Evidence-based Best Practice* data-base. [https://bpc.caregiver.org/#searchPrograms](https://bpc.caregiver.org/#searchPrograms)

Innovative mindfulness-based training for family and professional care partners (caregivers). Presence Care approach, like MBSR, results in sustained attitudinal changes aimed at benefiting care partners throughout the long journey of dementia.

The Presence Care training is the only mindfulness-based program designed specifically to meet the unique challenges of dementia care.

4 reasons to practice:
1. To reduce stress and improve your mental and physical health
2. To increase your sense of self-efficacy as a caregiver
3. To improve the well-being for the person with dementia
4. To decrease the need for behaviors in the person with dementia