

Supporting Dementia Care Across Care Settings

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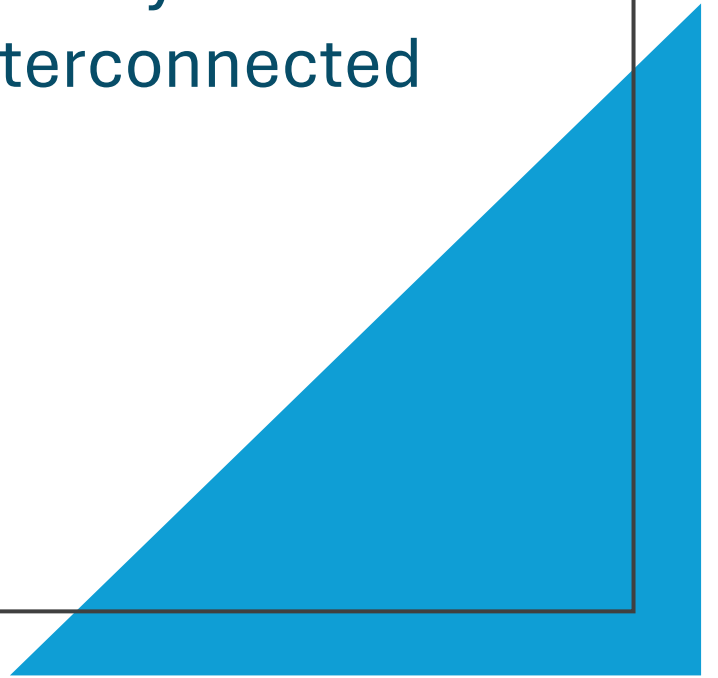
Today's Session

- Dementia care is a *systems issue* not setting specific
 - Complexity of care needs
 - Highlight evidence-based dementia care
 - Why strategies must translate to day-to-day practice
 - Importance of coordinated, setting specific strategies
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Systems Issue

- Dementia care is a whole-of-system challenge
- Cannot solve the issue within individual care settings
 - hospitals, residential aged care facilities, or community services?
- People living with dementia interact with multiple, interconnected systems across their life
 - outcomes depend on how well we work together

How can we do better?



Complexity of Care

Effective care models need to address

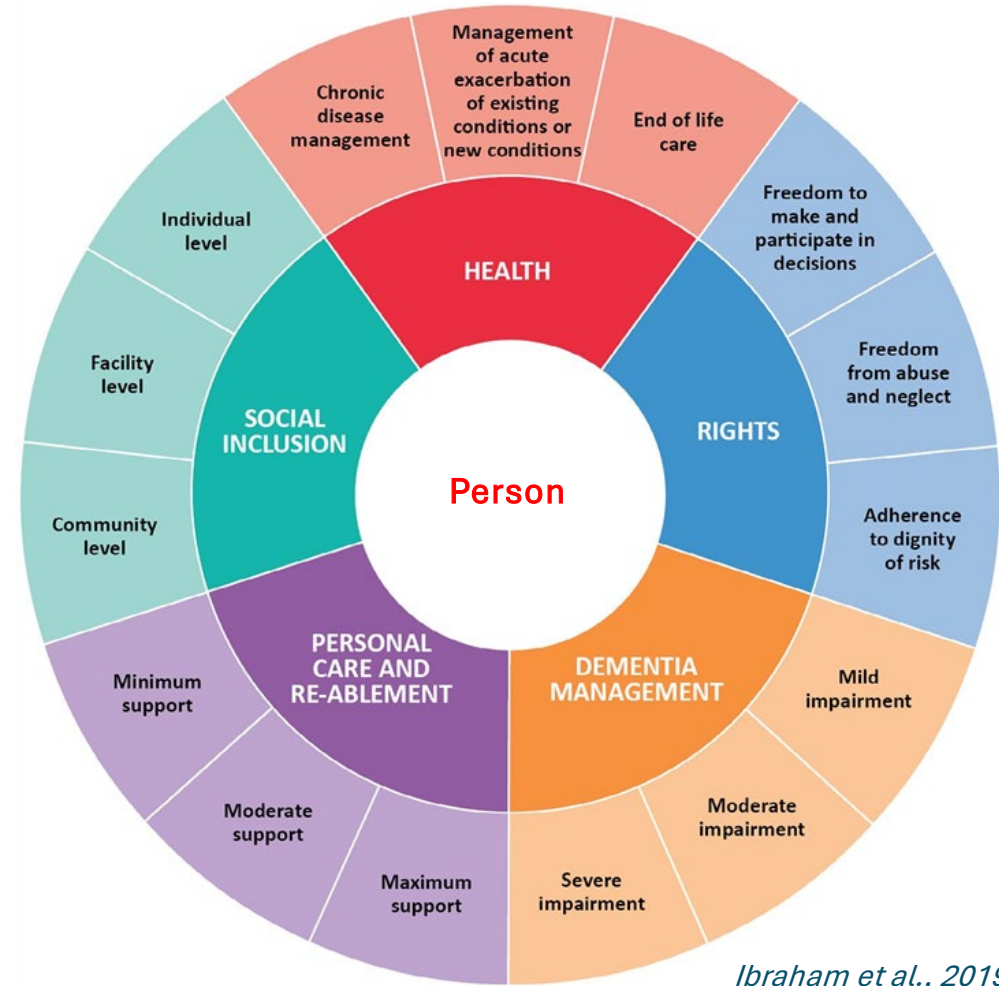
- dementia's individual, diverse clinical manifestations,
- prolonged neuro-degenerative course
- impact on the quality of life of both people living with dementia and care partners
- Focus on well-being & reablement

Metzelthin et al., 2024; Gitlin & Hodgson, 2025



Complexity of Care

- Priorities change;
 - social-inclusion
 - health
 - personal care
 - dementia management
- It's about being open to a wide range of options for supporting people in this stage of their life.



Dementia Care

People living with dementia are people; they need understanding and care

They are trying to communicate and become distressed for many of the same reasons that we do.....

THE DIFFERENCE is they are less able to

- Verbalise their feelings & needs
- Remember the information that helps them feel secure & in control
- Cope with or adapt to stressful situations

Power, 2017

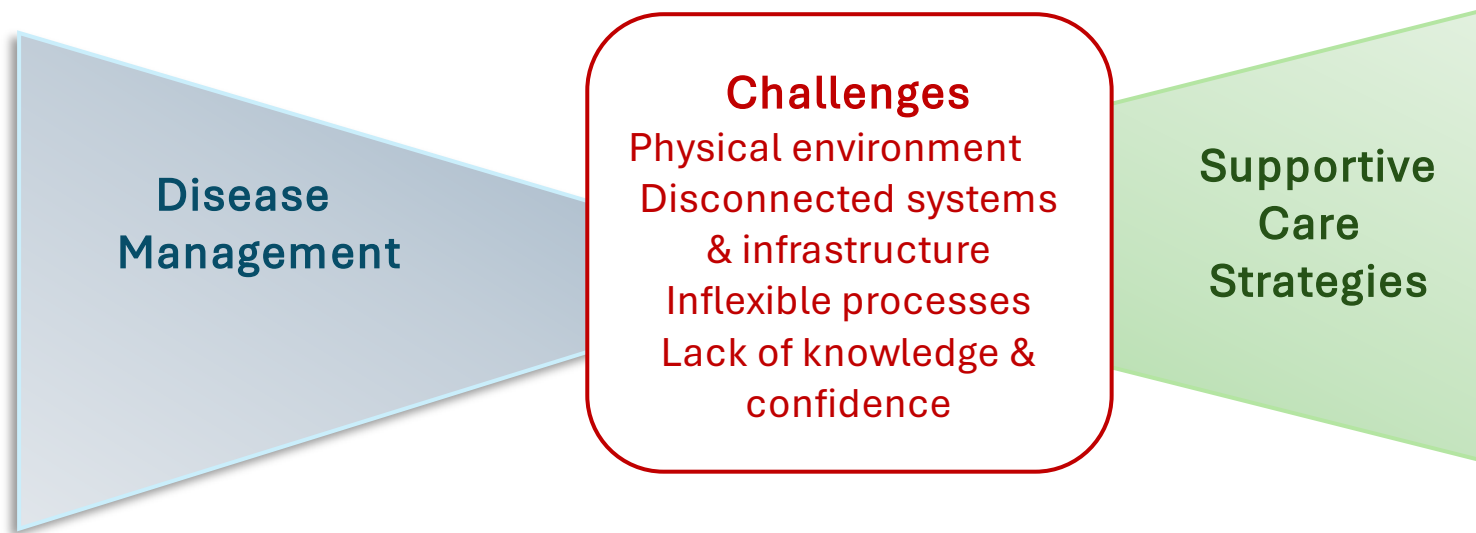


Dementia Care

“Dementia is a shift in the way a person experiences the world around her/him”

Power & Taylor, 2014, p. 19

Progress from



Adapted from Hawley, 2014 & King et al., 2024

Dementia Care - Evidence

People living with Dementia	Care Partners	Health Providers	Aged Care Staff
Devalued & disempowered (e.g., paternalistic & prescriptive relationships)	Lack of knowledge	Lack of time, lack of resources, lack of knowledge, lack of confidence/competence	
Afraid e.g., feeling lost	Information can be overwhelming & unclear	Relies on building trusting partnerships (person, care-partner, health provider) to facilitate support services	Role is physically and emotionally demanding
Difficult communicating	Excluded from care decisions	Preface beneficence - particularly decisions that impact on the independence	Mismatch between organisation priorities & needs of people living with dementia
Lack of control /independence	Unprepared for diversity of issues	Good intentions but lacks individualised approach	Value the close relationships developed with people with dementia

Dementia Australia, Davis, 2015, Todd et al., 2021, Smith et al., 2021

Dementia Care - Person Centred Care

Consider

- The absolute value of all human beings regardless of age or disability
- An individualised approach, recognising uniqueness
- From the perspective of the person
- A social environment that supports psychological needs *(Dawn Brooker, 2002)*



Dementia Care - What now?

- Separate the disease from the person
- Develop a relationship
- Intersection between the person, the care provider & the environment

Person	Care-Provider	Environment
Neurodegeneration Personality Unmet needs Sensory changes	Care-providers experience Unrealistic expectations Caregivers style Communication style	Physical, social & emotional environment Routine Safety

Adapted from the work of Kales et al., 2015; Kales, 2025

Verbalise their feelings & needs

Remember the information that helps them feel secure & in control

Cope with or adapt to stressful situations

Dementia Care - Practical Strategies

1. Modify the environment not the person

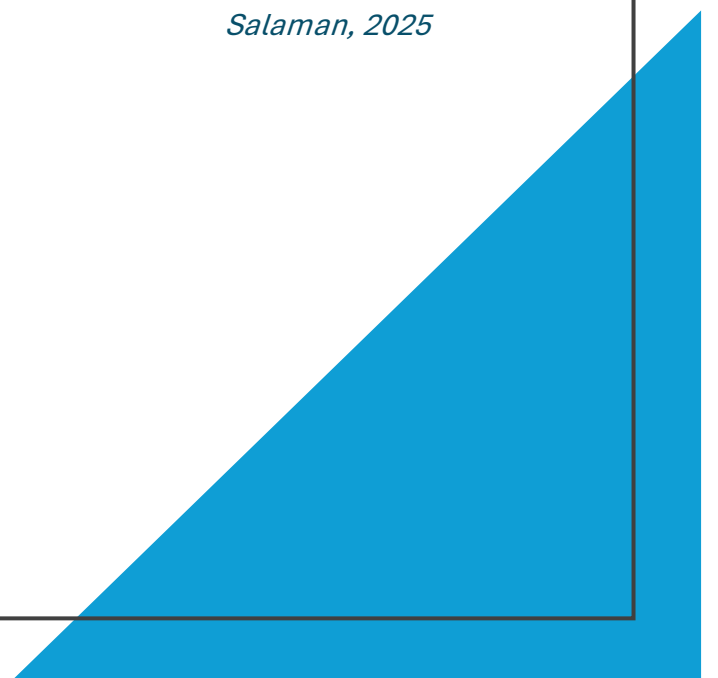
Physical	Social/Emotional
Lighting? Wayfinding Opportunistic activity Outdoors Noise? Signage Orientation	Security & Comfort Focus on the person not task Adapt approach to meet person at their level Prioritise social/emotional caring Adapt communication style Balance person-centredness with safety

Dementia Care - Practical Strategies

2. Adapt communication

- A person living with dementia ability to understand others and express themselves can change
- The electrical signals in the brain sometimes find a clear path, and the person can answer more clearly; other times, messages get stuck.
 - Create a connection
 - Use calm, friendly tone
 - Focus on feelings not facts
 - Provide validation and reassurance
 - Don't interrupt or assume
 - Use short, simple sentences

Salaman, 2025



Dementia Care - Practical Strategies

3. Consider your approach (staff/care partner)

- Is the language used stigmatising or blaming?
- Current or previous emotional experience
 - We all have tough days; “sorry I'm impatient or tired.”
 - Briefly disengage when necessary
 - Seek support
- Mismatch of expectations between staff/care partner & person living with dementia

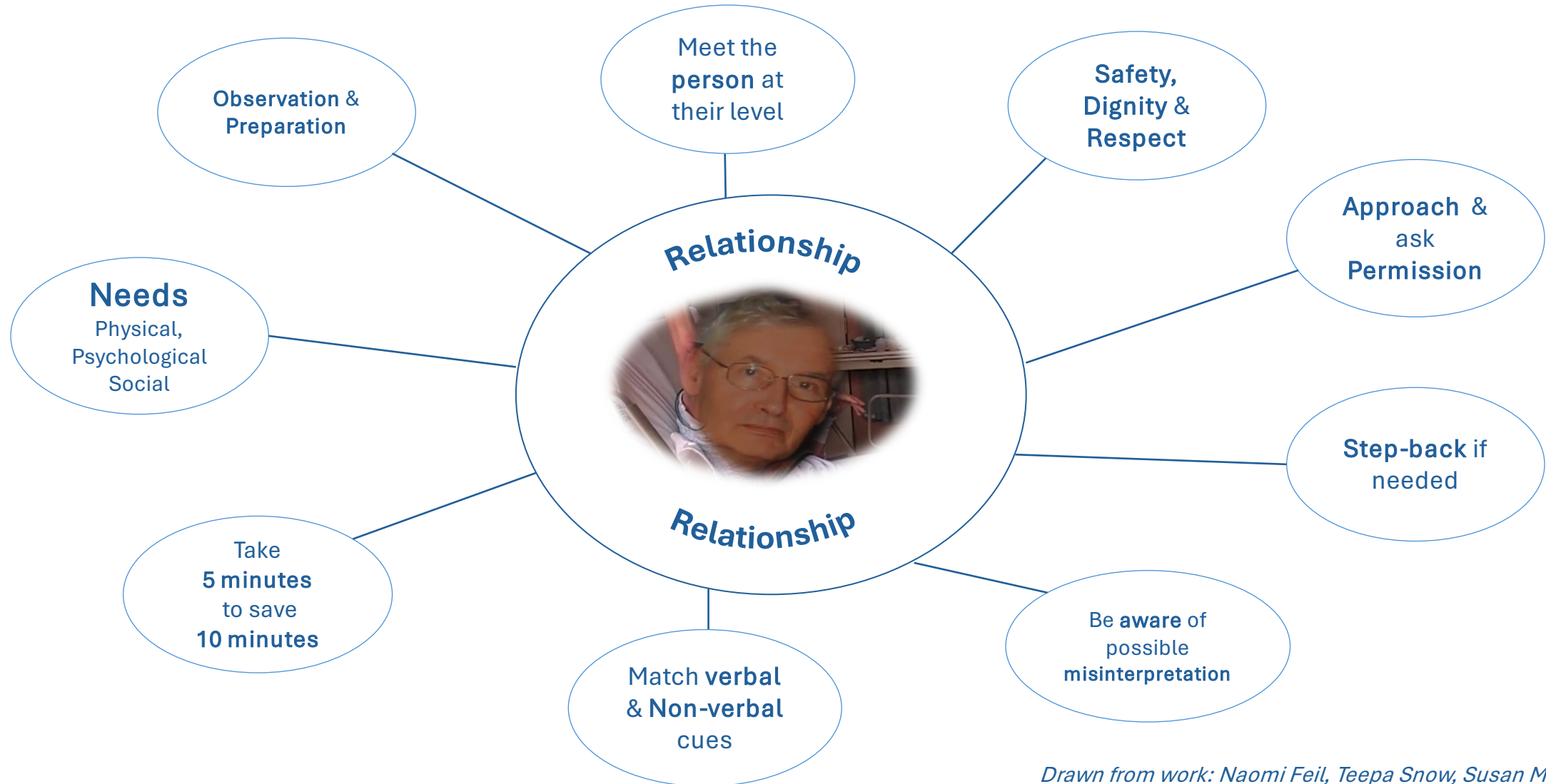
E.g., Bill is non-compliant – he won't brush his teeth

Bill can brush his teeth if you put toothpaste on the toothbrush,
and give him the toothbrush

Davis, 2015; Salaman, 2025

Dementia Care - 'Refusing' Care

Question: *If a stranger tried to take your clothes off, would you resist?*



Drawn from work: Naomi Feil, Teepa Snow, Susan Macaulay

A Final Thought

“We create living environments based on our view of the world, our daily needs, and our staffing patterns, and expect people whose brains are changing to adapt to them. And when they cannot, we diagnose a “behaviour problem” and medicate them...”

Changing our approach can produce more well-being for people living with dementia than any pill that is available today or is likely to be available in the foreseeable future.”

Al Power, 2017

