

This column explores an applied description from the field of a program or design that has been very successful. If you know of someone whose expertise and experience has been shared, please contact the editor at PO Box 39, #2107 Highway #215, Walton, Nova Scotia, Canada B0R 2R0; e-mail: csifton@ns.sympatico.ca.

English Rose Suites a Leader in Premier Dementia Care

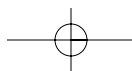
One day I may find myself entering the dark one-way tunnel of dementia. Once I step inside I am on a conveyer belt that moves me constantly away from the life I've known, the people I love and the person I once was. Looking forward it's dark and frightening... yet I cannot look back. As I near the end of the tunnel, I feel the hands of my loved ones lose their grasp on me. I'm confused and scared and all I see ahead is a black door. I notice the door is open just a crack and a warm light shines through from the other side. Can I get there before the door closes? Closer now, the crack widens and a foot is planted firmly in the door holding it open. A hand extends through the opening and reaching for mine holds it firmly. I'm gently guided through the door and embraced by a guide in my new world. Looking into my eyes my guide smiles and says, "I've got you."

Walking through these doors into English Rose Suites, an individual whose life has been altered by dementia begins a new chapter in living. For some, the change has been gradual and for others dramatic, but for all the preservation of their dignity and honoring their personhood is now assured. English Rose Suites addresses the spiritual, social, psychological, and biological aspects of the whole person,

realizing that this is paramount for optimal health. Residents are cared for from beginning stages of dementia to the end of life. The belief is that one's quality of life should not end with dementia.

Driving through the upscale residential areas in Minneapolis, Minn, where English Rose Suites' homes are located, it is hard not to be impressed by the executive-style homes lining the streets. Blending into the neighborhood is essential and a first-time visitor would most likely drive right past one of the homes. A welcome sign by the front door is the only hint that you have arrived at 1 of the 4 unique settings that is home to 6 individuals living with dementia. Appealing in design, neighbors have often stopped to ask whether the homes are a "Bed and Breakfast." Jayne Clairmont, along with her business partner and first cousin Brent Longtin, APRN, BC, are coowners and operators with a combined 45-plus years of professional experience and dedication for creating unique and special surroundings. Clairmont was intimately involved in the development of Kensington Cottages, nationally recognized dementia environments that were purposely built in the Midwest in the 1990s. Longtin, prior to joining English Rose Suites, was the director of psychiatry at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. He is

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an advanced practice nurse specializing in psychiatric/mental health nursing and is also an affiliate member of the American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry.

Drawing from Longtin and Clairmont's extensive health-care background, the physical environment at English Rose Suites has been designed with safety and security in mind. All homes have an alarm system installed on each exit door and handicapped accessible entrance/exit ramps. Homes that offer suites on the second level are equipped with an electric chair lift and a gated, secured stairway. Amenities such as low-rider bed frames, handicapped accessible toilets, grab bars; low pile carpeting, wide doorways, and hallways are among the many features that ensure ultimate comfort and safety for the residents. These elegant, yet warm environments have been highlighted in Elizabeth C. Brawley's book, *Design Innovations for Aging and Alzheimer's, Creating Caring Environments*, published in 2006.

The vision of English Rose Suites is to change the landscape of Memory Loss Care forever! This commitment is strengthened by policy and procedures that provide staff education, mentorship, and accountability. Staff are trained to be a "guide" by providing the compassion and nurturing that each person deserves every step of the way. It is imperative that staff connect with the residents' particular interests, strengths, and abilities, so that the individual care plan can mirror these attributes. The focus is all about the journey.

At the foundation of English Rose Suites' Care Philosophy is the resident's right to dignified living. Staff training ensures that although changes are happening internally, each resident continues to live the life that resembles as closely as possible what is or has been familiar to them. Dignity is preserved through continued participation and engagement in a host of daily living routines for as long as and in whatever ways are possible.

When a resident moves in, families complete a "Life Story" for their loved one which provides invaluable information used to tailor programming and bring the resident's story to "life" for the caregivers. This tool sets the tone for the dignified treatment expected as you "get to know" who this person was before dementia. The "Life Story" supports English Rose Suites' individualized and holistic approach to care. Subsequently, there are no square pegs expected to fit in round holes.

English Rose Suites has shown that their Home Care Model promotes independence that allows a resident to thrive in the environment. An exceptional staff-to-resident ratio (1:3) results in more time, patience, and attention to detail. Staff is always mindful to respect the place and time

an individual may be reliving in his or her mind. Offering choices whenever possible and appropriate allows the resident to maximize his or her capability and provides an important sense of purpose for the individual. These are proven principles that every caregiver must embrace to work at English Rose Suites. Every employee is encouraged daily to fulfill the following core values:

- Love the residents.
- Make each one feel as if he or she is the most important person in the world.
- Enter their world, meet them where they are, and provide immeasurable comfort in accepting and valuing each one.

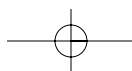
A longtime staff member is quoted as saying, "We gently love the residents throughout the day."

The training program at English Rose Suites is scientifically grounded. Caregivers are painstakingly selected and trained in different aspects of care that include Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, recognizing triggers that create behaviors, problem solving, supportive communication skills, personal care, and other related care giving aspects. In the programming/activity module, special attention is given to what constitutes "being a real friend to the resident."

English Rose Suites created "Pathways for Growth and Learning," a mentoring program with individualized care plans for employees which identifies formal and informal training opportunities throughout the year. When additional growth is necessary, one-on-one retooling (training and education) occurs with all employees, regardless of years of employment, allowing each employee to maximize his or her potential. English Rose Suites' talented management team recognizes the significant role of its staff and rewards high performance, which perpetuates a cycle of success for all.

Part of the success of the English Rose Suites's model is the state-of-the-art doctor and nursing delivery of care that takes place behind the scenes to fully support a social model as well as the "Aging in Place" approach to care. A resident will live out his or her life with dignity, respect, and honor until the end of life at English Rose Suites. This is accomplished by the focus placed on the mission and value-driven approach to care.

The approach to Programming at English Rose Suites encompasses both organized and spontaneous activities. Recognizing the importance of music, English Rose Suites employs a complement of musical entertainment. The residents enjoy listening to a variety of instruments and musical genre including piano, flute, accordion, guitar, and even



bag pipes! The diversity appeals to the residents' individual tastes while providing a multisensory experience. A special treat for both residents and staff is the monthly visit of Tami Briggs, a nationally renowned harpist, who skillfully incorporates many aspects of Healing Music in her interaction with the residents. On one such occasion, a particularly anxious resident became calm for an extended period of time. The music allowed this woman to find that obscure peaceful place within as the music soothed her soul. Another wonderful example of music therapy is a song created by the residents along with a music therapist. Sung to the tune of "My Wild Irish Rose" the lyrics are printed below. It is even more delightful to hear the recording.

My home English Rose
 The place that we all know
 Where I hang my hat
 And folks stop to chat
 My home English Rose
 A place where kindness grows
 A place I can rest
 And always feel blessed
 In my sweet home English Rose

English Rose Suites looks at all aspects of daily life as opportunities to engage residents. Various locations in the homes are used for naturally occurring experiences. For example, residents are able to enjoy familiar activities in their kitchen such as baking, meal preparation, and washing dishes, which helps them feel purposeful and emotionally satisfied. These large homes lend themselves to residents having fun with fresh ideas and stimulation throughout every day of the week based on a monthly calendar that incorporates the following 12 hallmarks:

1. Cognitive/intellectual
2. Sensory stimulation
3. Socialization
4. Creative
5. Productive/purposeful/life skills
6. Spiritual enrichment
7. Emotionally supportive/one on one
8. Physical activity/exercise
9. Personal cares
10. Special events/outings
11. Outdoor enjoyment
12. Intergenerational

As a former activity director, I am particularly impressed by the outings planned for the residents, knowing the effort and skill they demand. At English Rose Suites the joy of life does not end with dementia, rather there is a commitment

to allow individuals to thrive in this new chapter of their life. To experience this firsthand, I participated in an outing by accompanying 3 residents, along with a staff member, on a trip to a lake cabin. This journey was roughly a 4-hour round trip car ride. This outing demonstrated individuality for each resident described as follows.

On the outing to the cabin that warm August morning, I noticed each resident meticulously groomed, hair neatly combed, nails polished, and makeup and lipstick on. Having likely been a difficult task to complete independently, the women's appearance was evidence of staff's assistance in preserving pride and familiarity. For these women, at least externally, not much had changed from a previous life of independent outings with friends. Evelyn, chatty and animated the entire car ride, looked quite comfortable with her rose-colored velvet scarf wrapped loosely around her light blue sweater. She held a sun hat and her purse on her lap. Uva sat in the front seat and appeared anxious. She frequently held out her hand to a staff member who would receive it patiently and reassuringly. For moments, her anxiety would seem to dissipate and she would exist, if briefly, in the enjoyment of the moment. Conversation was guided by skillful acknowledgment of anxious feelings, encouragement, and subtle distraction to notice the beautiful countryside along the way.

Ann, sitting to my right, was the quiet one in the bunch. She answered in a soft voice when I spoke to her. She smiled often, lighting up a pretty face beneath her shining red hair. Her body language spoke for her on several occasions, indicating to me that she was too warm and her seat belt was uncomfortable. During the course of the day, Ann, with limited verbalization, repeatedly alluded to a specific dissatisfaction or concern. I observed a staff member pick up on this by listening intently and validating her needs with an understanding of Ann's concern and was able to acknowledge it with sincerity. Ann's face and body visibly relaxed as this worry was now alleviated. She smiled as she returned the staff member's warm hug.

One resident chose to ride on the pontoon. She relaxed with her eyes closed recalling the boats in Duluth. The others chose to enjoy the view from the outdoor deck. What was really important to me was that they were all given the opportunity to have this experience. Evelyn was thrilled with the day and summed it up nicely, "You make your life yourself. It's up to you to find it interesting."

My belief is that the day trip was a success because the following key elements were in place:

- Ongoing staff training and mentoring accompanied by skillful supervision.

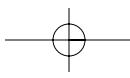
- Absolute unwavering expectations that every resident receives exceptional, dignified care that is individualized to meet each person's needs, wherever they cognitively might be.
- Loving, compassionate caregivers who are devoted to the residents. (Training can support this, but the motivation to serve must be intrinsic to fully support residents.)

The essence and focus of memory loss care must shift to ability rather than disability. The philosophy of care and of those who provide it should allow for patient, gentle love and support so that residents can experience success—whether it is in the form of a trip to the cabin, taking a

convertible ride to the Dairy Queen or going out for a luncheon wearing a red sequined baseball cap and white gloves. Regardless of the activity, if it incorporates a choice and meaningfully engages individuals to their fullest capacity, their delight will naturally show. Caring for those with memory loss is considered a privilege at English Rose Suites.

Carol Riley worked as a caregiver at English Rose Suites in 1999. She went on to work in Assisted Living as an Activity Director. Currently, Riley is a volunteer at English Rose Suites and serves on their nonprofit board, Pathways for Elders.

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