

# Gentle Persuasive Approaches in Dementia Care

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## What is Gentle Persuasive Approaches to Dementia Care?

*Gentle Persuasive Approaches to Dementia Care*, or otherwise known as GPA, is an innovative education curriculum that will soon be offered to long-term care facilities throughout the region of Ontario.

Many front-line staff in long-term care have little or no training in the management of challenging behaviour associated with dementia. Staff consistently report feeling vulnerable and at risk of injury if they have not been trained in respectful, non-violent, self-protective techniques.

The GPA curriculum addresses these needs and is designed for delivery to interdisciplinary groups from all departments within the long-term care setting, for example, health care aides, dietary aides, and housekeeping staff.

The curriculum is a 7.5 hour day and is case-based, interactive, and practical. It reframes challenging behaviour to be interpreted as self-protective/defensive or responsive behaviour that occurs as a result of unmet needs, thus encouraging staff to

assess the meaning of the behaviour and work alongside the resident.

This curriculum has been piloted in seven regions in Central West and Central South in 2004. The curriculum was facilitated by the Psychogeriatric Resource Consultants of Central West and Central South.

The feedback received from long-term care staff has been very positive. Staff have indicated a high level of satisfaction with the curriculum and have shown significant increases in perceived competency in the evaluation findings.

## Curriculum Objectives

The curriculum is targeted to all levels and departments of staff in the long term care facility.

Involvement in this curriculum will provide long-term care staff with invaluable education and the opportunity to develop skills to manage those responsive behaviours staff experience as highly catastrophic in an effective manner.

The overall goal of the GPA curriculum is to educate staff on how to use a person-centred,

compassionate and gentle persuasive approach, respond respectfully and with confidence and skill to challenging behaviors associated with dementia

More specifically, as a result of participating in this curriculum, staff will develop:

1. Understand that the client with dementia is a unique human being who has an emotional response to stimuli;
2. From an holistic perspective explain the relationship between the disease

process and the individual's behavioral response;

3. Describe emotional, environmental, and interpersonal aspects of communicating with persons with dementia;
4. Choose strategies that serve to diffuse challenging behaviors rather than escalating them;
5. Demonstrate the suitable and respectful protective techniques to use in response to catastrophic behavior.




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*“I was very satisfied with every aspect of this workshop”*

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*“I found this very helpful, I could see the staff enjoyed this and gained knowledge that will better allow them to take care for the residents not only in the secured area but within the whole facility.”*

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*“I learned many beneficial facts and solutions to potential and current obstacles in my job. It [GPA curriculum] is necessary for all staff interacting with residents living with dementia.”*

## Interested?

If you are interested in obtaining more information about this curriculum, please contact either the PRCs in Central South or Central West or the CGEC. For a listing of the local PRC's in your region, please go to:  
<http://alzheimerontario.org/local/files/Web%20site/Dementia%20Networks/PRCs%20PECs%20DN%20Alzh%20Chptr%20Contacts.pdf>

OR, contact the CGEC:  
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## Course Content

**Module 1** – Overview of the principles of person-centred care, meaning behind responsive, self-protective behaviours of persons with dementia

**Module 2** – Introduction to impact of dementia on the brain. Discussion centres on the 7 A's of dementia (anosagnosia, amnesia, aphasia, apraxia, altered perception, attentional deficits, apathy), relationship of each to responsive behaviours in dementia, and care implications

**Module 3** – Overview of interpersonal, environmental and communication strategies that assist front-line staff to respond effectively to escalating behaviours

**Module 4** – Overview of body containment principles that when respectfully used in the clinical setting can assist staff to de-escalate the person with dementia, particularly when the behavioural profile includes physical acting out. Staff participants learn how to protect themselves, in addition to respectful escort techniques, both individual and team versions that can be used to manage catastrophic behaviours. Staff participants have an opportunity to apply the techniques in role play situations.

## Course Delivery

The course is delivered through a 7 ½ hour, day-long workshop, involving multiple educational strategies to meet the various learning styles of front-line, point of care staff. Course content is implemented via role plays, focus groups, didactic mini-lectures, experiential exercises, case studies, and videotapes. It is the intent of the curriculum to be delivered by Master Instructors who are PIECES trained Psychogeriatric Resource Consultants (PRC's) so that point-of-care staff can continue to be coached in their application of key competencies at the bedside.

The curriculum development team of the GPA project have designed a literature-based product that has been evaluated for its effectiveness, measuring impact on participant self-perceived competency, knowledge acquisition and clinical application.

## Acknowledgements

The GPA curriculum was developed with the assistance of a research grant from the Regional Geriatric Program Central. This curriculum has been made possible through the spirit of collaboration inherent in the mandate of the Continuing Gerontological Education Cooperative (CGEC). The following people participated in the curriculum development process:

- Lori Schindel Martin, Director, Ruth Sherman Centre, Shalom Village (Editor)
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