

Thursday 21 March 2019

Montessori principles prove promising in improving quality of life for people living with dementia

American Montessori expert, Dr Cameron Camp, Director of Research and Development at the Centre for Applied Research in Dementia, will be in Australia this week for a series of sold-out master classes on holistic engagement of people living with dementia.

An internationally-known, research scientist in the field of ageing, Dr Camp said we look at dementia as a form of disability rather than as a disease.

"When you focus on dementia as a disease, then you're focusing on deficits. Our approach is – what can we do to help people living with dementia?" Dr Camp said.

The Montessori technique is widely recognised as an excellent non-pharmacological intervention and an effective means of better engaging people living with dementia.

In a 2016 study published in the [Advances in Ageing Research Journal](#), Dr Camp found that participants of a Montessori program showed improvement in some activities such as being able to feed themselves. They also decreased their use of antipsychotics, antidepressants and sleeping pills.

Dementia Australia's Centre for Dementia Learning Director Dr David Sykes said it was exciting that the workshops were in such high demand.

"Maria Montessori's philosophy was that every human being has the right to be treated with respect and dignity, to have a meaningful role in a community and to contribute to the best of their abilities," Dr Sykes said.

The Montessori approach is used to maximise the capacity of the person by assessing and incorporating each person's stage of development through creating cognitive ramps to accommodate and engage the person living with dementia.

By creating opportunities for people living with dementia to engage in meaningful activities, through matching these with their abilities, they are able to maintain a level of autonomy and dignity in continuing to make valuable contributions to the community.

Through focusing on strengths and remaining abilities of people living with dementia, and matching these along with their interest to specific activities, they are able to continue to lead meaningful and rewarding lives.

"We are thrilled to be hosting Dr Camp for these workshops – they present a highly unique and valuable opportunity for those in the aged care industry to increase their knowledge and skills in providing support for people living with dementia," Dr Sykes said.

More information on Dr Camp's workshops can be found [here](#). The workshops will be held in Brisbane on 22 March and Sydney on 25 March, 2019.

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Dementia Australia is the national peak body and charity for people, of all ages, living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers. It provides advocacy, support services, education and information. An estimated 436,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach almost 1.1 million by 2058. Dementia Australia is the new voice of Alzheimer's Australia. Dementia Australia's services are supported by the Australian Government.

National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500

Interpreter service available

(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)

Dementia is a National Health Priority Area

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When talking or writing about dementia please refer to [Dementia Language Guidelines](#).