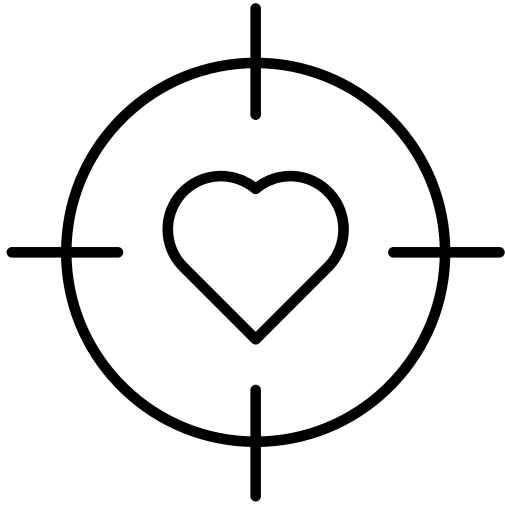


THE GUIDED LIGHT

LA CROSSE COUNTY'S DEMENTIA NEWSLETTER
FOR HOPE, SUPPORT, AND RESOURCES



Spirituality and Dementia Care

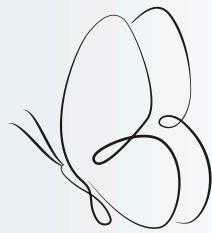
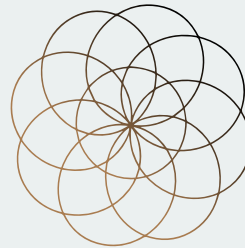


Spirituality is something experienced by everyone, regardless of personal religious beliefs. Spirituality describes the aspect of being human that causes us to seek both meaning and purpose in the world around us. Engaging in spiritual activities can help you acknowledge, process, and express your feelings regularly as you and your care partner progress through the dementia journey.

Spirituality and Dementia Care

Fear, loss of self, and anxiety about memory loss or cognitive changes can increase as the symptoms of dementia progress for our care partners. Spiritual activities are shown to promote feelings of comfort, peace, and clarity in times of uncertainty.

Spiritual activities can help caregivers incorporate time that elevates their care partners' remaining abilities, instead of only adjusting to abilities that have been lost.



Utilize your network and team to guide them through discovering spiritual activities. This may be an opportunity for you to explore your own spiritual needs in addition to a loved one with dementia.

For caregivers, engaging in spiritual activities can also be very beneficial. Your sense of meaning and purpose may change greatly as the needs of your care recipient continue to change.

Spirituality can help you discover a new sense of meaning, or even connection to others in your community. Keep reading to learn about how to support spiritual needs!

Did you know...

Listening to and enjoying music, returning to lifelong favorite hobbies, playing fun card games, and celebrating the holidays with your loved ones are all examples of different types of spiritual activities that you and your care partner can engage in!

Spirituality Means a *Connection* To...

Religion

Nature

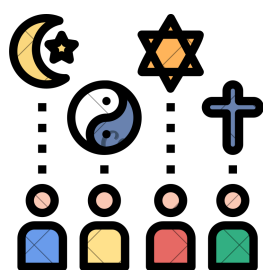
Art

Meaningful Relationships

Religion - Religion is one of the four elements of spirituality that can fulfill spiritual needs. If you have relied on religion as a natural support throughout your life, consider those support avenues still relevant and meaningful as dementia progresses. If some aspects of religious practice feels too overwhelming for you and your care recipient, try books, handouts or online sermons that can be watched in the home. Faith communities can offer connection to spiritual support to cope with the challenges of dementia, call the parish office to inquire.

Nature - Connections to spirituality are not specific to religion or attending church services. For some, nature may help them achieve a sense of purpose and meaning in the world around them. Elements of nature, such as the sight of water, the sound of leaves rustling in the woods, or the smell of flowers in a garden may trigger pleasant memories from the past and provide peace in frequent moments of uncertainty and stress that are common for those impacted by dementia. Consider taking small walks near the river, woods, marsh, or local community gardens to promote this sense of connection to the natural world.

Art - Even if it was not part of your life prior to diagnosis, different forms of appreciating the arts represent additional ways to fulfill spiritual needs. Engaging with forms of art, such as listening to music, making simple crafts, or listening to stories can also help us focus on the creative things we can still do and enjoy, as opposed to the abilities that have been lost. Consider making seasonal at-home craft, playing music during time at home or in car rides, or enrolling them in local programs that help support a connection to these activities and others in the community impacted by a dementia diagnosis.



Meaningful Relationships - Many relationships can change as the symptoms of dementia progress. The system of friends you have in place might not fully understand the challenges you and your loved one are facing. Consider explaining to the people around you what everyday life and the changes you've experienced now look like for you. Spending time with trusted friends and family members can fulfill spiritual needs in comfortable spaces. Even if the conversations may not be the same, interaction with familiar and friendly faces can provide comfort and ways to overcome the challenges of loneliness and isolation that are commonly experienced by those impacted by dementia.

Article Source: National Institutes of Health

Benefits of Spirituality in Dementia Care

Within yourself...

- **personhood and identity**
 - being intentional and present when caregiving
 - supporting cognitive and memory changes of the dementia journey
- **reflection**
 - creates time and space to “slow down” and process the many changes that occur with caregiving
 - activities can stimulate memories from the past for our care partners
- **hope and peace**
 - belief in something greater than yourself can create a sense of calmness in the face of uncertainty
 - spirituality can help care partners cope with the constant changes occurring in day to day life
- **expression**
 - spirituality can assist caregivers in identifying/expressing new or changing beliefs and values
 - spiritual activities support verbal and nonverbal emotional expression from our care partners

In the world around you...

Society and others around us often try to communicate that our value in this world is based on our abilities, our resume, and our capacity for cognition. Not only in this notion completely untrue, basing your value on these elements can be defeating. Instead, we encourage you to base value in your *compassion* towards the world around you. Your day-to-day life may look very different now or may slowly become very different from what society expects of you, and *that is okay*. If you feel like you're struggling with where you are at in life and on this journey, it may be time to consider incorporating some of the spiritual activities discussed above, to develop a new sense of purpose in and connection to the world while you continue on this journey of dementia. A gentle reminder for professionals to also be sure to discuss spiritual care with patients (and make appropriate referrals to community resources) as a component of supporting their medical and emotional health.

Simplicity of Spirituality...

Spirituality is subjective, meaning there is no right or wrong way to engage with these activities. Connection to nature, art, and meaningful relationships, can be as simple as sitting with your loved one in front of a window at home, appreciating something made by others, or looking at photos of family members and loved ones.





MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

July - August - September 2025

Don't Miss These Programs/Events This Quarter

- Grief & Loss Group starting in August! This group offers caregiver group counseling to help work through grief and process ambiguous loss. Please join in if later stages of care, end-of-life or beyond. Call/Text for pre-registration Joy 608-519-3790. Sessions weekly. Questions? Call Kelsey 608-386-0767
- Dementia Live - August 18th 1:00-2:00pm at Holmen Area Community Center. Must Register, Call 608-785-5700 or online <https://tinyurl.com/y547njkp>
- Caregiver Pontoon Rides
July 9, 10am-Noon & July 25, 1-3pm
Aug 5, 10am-Noon & Aug 29, 2-4pm
To register: 608-785-5700.
Pontoon Departs from Mosey's Landing W7221 North Shore Ln. Onalaska
- Caregiver Cruise September 13 1:30-3pm
Register: Call 608-785-5700

NEW RESOURCE!

Moments of Meaning Packs for Kids!

Complimentary comfort kits designed to bring families closer while navigating dementia. These packs offer children, teens, and caregivers tools to foster connection, support emotional well-being, and create meaningful memories. Tailored for the "sandwich generation" caregivers (people balancing the care of elderly parents and their own young children) these packs provide valuable resources for engaging with loved ones, honoring memories, and managing emotional health. It helps children and teens stay connected to their aging loved one with dementia through comfort item, while supporting their own emotional needs. Call to get one for kiddos who could benefit: 608-785-5700

Bringing Hope & Light to the Dementia Journey Conference

FREE conference for: All those impacted by dementia or interested in the cause!

Wednesday, August 13th, 2025
First Free Church
123 Mason St. Onalaska, WI 54650
8:30am-3:15pm



Keynote Speaker:
Jolene Brackey, Author of
Creating Moments of Joy

FREE day of
learning &
onsite
respite!

Breakout Sessions:

- Using Meditation to Live Better with Cognitive Decline
- Embracing the Journey: Practical Tips & Laughter
- TimeSlips Engagement Party
- Persons Living Mild Cognitive Impairment or Dementia with Panel
- Living Well with Dementia
- Caring with Confidence: Everyday Skills for Family Caregivers
- Minds in Motion: Sessions for the Brain, Body, & Soul

**Register Online: <https://form.jotform.com/rkamrowski/hope-light-conference>
or Call 715-343-6275**

**FOR MORE ONGOING dementia programs,
resources, social activities, caregiver support groups, and more...
Stop by or Call ADRC 608-785-5700**