

Using iPads to support residents with responsive behaviours: *Considerations for use and suggested applications*

Responsive behavior is a term commonly used to refer to actions, words or gestures presented by a person with dementia as a way of responding to something negative, frustrating, or confusing in their social and physical environment (Alzheimer’s Society of Canada). When seeking to understand behavior, it is important to remember that all words, gestures, and actions communicate meanings, needs and concerns. It is through a thorough and comprehensive assessment (i.e. PIECES™) that care teams can identify possible unmet needs and reasons contributing to behavior. Individualized care planning then builds off what we know about the person – and their strengths, preferences, unmet needs and soothing strategies.







When exploring behavior support strategies for persons with dementia, iPads may be a helpful tool to consider, as a part of a person’s individualized care plan. Below are some examples of how care teams have successfully integrated iPad use for individualized behavior support planning:

- In the evenings, Mrs. Smith has been searching for her daughter and asking “when she can go home.” Her social history notes her love for cats and Patsy Cline. Staff use the iPad, playing **YouTube** videos to engage her with cat videos and play Patsy Cline in the early evening, which brings her joy.
- Mrs. Jones is constantly seeking staff attention. She calls out often but cannot identify what it is she needs. Staff identified Mrs. Jones is very anxious at times and to help alleviate her anxiety they use the iPad to listen to **calming music**, do **mindfulness exercises** and listen to her favorite **audio books**.
- Mr. Reid has been using inappropriate language with staff when they are helping to provide care – staff identified Mr.Reid has a lot of stiffness in his arms and legs. Using the iPad, Mr.Reid is able to **follow exercises** to help relieve some of the discomfort he has before receiving care.
- Ms. Parker has a hard time getting going in the morning, as she is missing her family. Her daughter recorded a **VoiceMemo** – a video recording that staff can play for her to help bring her reassurance and familiarity– a form of simulated presence. This helps her feel more comfortable to start her day.

Behavior Support Care Planning & iPad Use: Considerations

- Know the person’s life story – this can help guide what activities may be most helpful on the iPad.
- Know the person’s strengths and capabilities, and any unmet needs to inform how to use the iPad (consult Rehab or Rec staff, see PIECES™ assessment). Provide the appropriate level of support.
 - Ensure the volume is turned up; use headphones or an amplifier to help with hearing loss.
 - If the person has difficulty seeing, try to zoom in!
- Try to find a quiet space for the interaction – it’s hard to focus with background noise.
- Position the iPad so that the resident can see and be seen if using for a video chat.
- Avoid using unfamiliar words like “iPad” and “apps”.
- Don’t get discouraged! The technology may not always cooperate, or it could just be a bad day. Try again - when it works, the results can be so rewarding!
- For more tips & information, visit www.cyberseniors.org. Membership is free at the moment!
- To learn more about video recordings (Voice Memo function), see <https://www.vchri.ca/ipad-project>

The following are some popular apps that may be helpful to use with your residents:

<p>Sensory Experiences</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pocket Pond: Create ripples in the water, listen to the birds and watch the fish swim by. • Heat Pad: Create designs with the warmth of a finger! • Bubble Wrap: Touch the screen and pop the bubble wrap. • Finger Paint: Paint by moving your finger around. • Let's Create! Pottery: Create your own pottery.
<p>Music</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You Tube: Search & play music! Can also look for sing-alongs, like these from Northwood. • Musical Paint: Create musical tones with your fingers! • Beamz: Create your own music. Choose a genre of music and add instrument sounds. • Celtic Harp Lite: Play the relaxing harp by touching the strings!
<p>Reminiscing</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice Memos: preloaded on the iPad, it allows you/family to record videos and messages. • Pictello: Create life stories for your resident (\$). • You Tube: Look up old movies, songs, commercials, TV shows. • Promenade: Designed for care givers to use when interacting with people with dementia. • House of Memories: Explore objects from the past.
<p>Games & Exploration</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flower Garden: Plant and water flowers, and then watch them grow. • Google Maps: look up anywhere in the world, and zoom in to see a street-level view. • Dominoes: just like the classic! • Mobile Montessori: A variety of Montessori based apps ideal for a person with dementia. • Lively Silver: Games for people with early dementia.
<p>Cognition and communication</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MemMatches: Vivid photography bring this classic memory game to life. • Category Lite: It uses categorization exercises to help work on vocabulary • Google Translate: not an app, but a website that can be helpful to translate key words.
<p>Video Calling</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FaceTime: Ideal for use when the other person also has an apple device. Requires cell #. • Google Duo: Ideal to use when the other person uses an Android device. Requires set up with a Gmail account and password. • Other apps for virtual visiting include: House Party, Zoom, Skype, What'sApp.

Technical considerations before you get started:

- It may help to have a lead person(s) oversee the iPads to develop policies/procedures for their use (i.e. cleaning between users; charging; storage; signing out, etc.)
- To download apps, you'll need an Apple account. Involve IT support, if you have access. Keep the login info and password handy so other staff can access if needed.
- Many apps have 'in-app purchases'. To prevent extra charges, take steps to prevent this, such as forcing a password, or ensuring supervision. Info here: <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT204030>
- Reliable WiFi access is ideal to support iPad use, especially if using for video calling.
- Consider a protective case for the iPad, or a mobile standing cart for its use, like the Language Line.

This resource sheet was compiled from information shared by Northwood Recreation Therapy, a previous presentation given by staff from the Veteran's Memorial Building, and the Suggested iPad Dementia Apps page from www.KeepingBusy.ca.