

Celebrating Successes as a Client Support Coordinator **By: Denise Ansell, Client Support Coordinator**

Our job is to provide support and information to assist individuals who have dementia as well as their families. When supporting individuals with a degenerative disease, often the topic of discussion is loss. How to deal with the loss of memory, changes in personality, loss of roles and eventually loss of abilities. One may ask, “with all the loss that is dealt with, how do you know when you have achieved success?”. When I asked my colleagues, who are also Client Support Coordinators this question they certainly had a lot to say.

“When working with individuals who have dementia, I know I have achieved success when they smile and laugh and I know for a moment their disease is not at all what they are thinking about. When they are active and happy in the moment doing an activity they enjoy I know my work has been successful”.

“When I receive a call from a daughter who is worried about their parent and they just don’t know what to do. With the information I am able to provide and the support that I am able to give, the daughter feels more in control because they now know how to help their parent. At that moment I know my work has been successful”.

“During a support group when a caregiver is having a difficult time and needs some advice it is often another caregiver who offers it. As the facilitator of the group I feel I have been successful because I have been able to connect individuals who are experiencing similar issues. Advice from someone who is actually experiencing similar things is so much more valuable. The group members will often exchange their numbers and begin a friendship”.

“As a Client Support Coordinator there are many opportunities to educate clients about common symptoms of dementia. Often when doing this you experience a moment when something you have said strikes a chord with the person you are talking to. When they experience this “light bulb moment” and finally are able to understand why something is occurring, I know I have been successful”.

“When I go on a home visit and find out the person with dementia can no longer drive or can no longer cook, I am able to connect them with community agencies that will assist. With this assistance the individual can continue to live independently in their own home for a longer period of time. When this occurs I know I have been successful”.

As Client Support Coordinators we do our job knowing about the losses but focusing on supports that will decrease the impact of these losses on the person with dementia and their families. We experience these successes each and every day... and that is what keeps us coming back to work.