

Alzheimer Society Lending Library – Book Review

Reviewed By: Jaime Fryer

Date of Review: March 6th, 2015

Title: *Dementia Beyond Drugs, Changing the Culture of Care*

Author: G. Allen Power

APA Citation: Power, G.A. (2010). *Dementia Beyond Drugs, Changing the Culture of Care*. Baltimore. Health Professionals Press, Inc.

Keywords: Eden Alternative, dementia, Alzheimer's disease, stigma, living disease, overmedication, long term care, biomedical, experiential, institutional

Target Audience: Health Care Professionals (HCPs) and family members caring for someone living with dementia

Other Appropriate Audiences: Anyone who has been affected by dementia, either directly or indirectly, including those who are living with the disease

Brief Summary: *Dementia Beyond Drugs* is an experience-based text that uses real life stories to emphasize how the biomedical approach and institutional model associated with long term care are insufficient for caring for people with dementia. The book suggests that overmedication, inappropriate environmental features, and lack of human connection, autonomy, and stimulation for growth and improvement (among many others) are all serious realities that largely contribute to the negative stigma associated with long term care homes. The author proposes an alternate model, the experiential approach, derived from the "Eden Alternative," for improving life in long term care for people with dementia. This approach focuses on physical improvements for long term care homes, decreasing the unnecessary use of medication, and how to respectfully and appropriately care for the needs (both physical *and* psychological) of a resident with dementia, with the hopes of improving the long term care experience for people with dementia and their families.

Personal Critique: This book provides valuable insight as to how to properly care for someone with dementia, and offers great suggestions for ways that long term care homes can be altered in order to improve the experience of their residents. By incorporating real life experiences and stories, the author is able to reinforce the points he makes, and connects on a personal level with the reader. However, as a long term care employee myself, I found a lot of the information regarding the flaws of long term care homes to be harsh and inaccurate, reflecting outdated stereotypes associated with institutions from many decades ago. In my experience, today's long term care homes do their very best to balance experience with some of the necessary attributes of institutional living and care that are required in order to promote safety and organization.