

SPRING 2024

Family Matters

A MAGAZINE FOR SENIORS, CAREGIVERS & PROVIDERS





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We're thrilled to announce that Family Matters In-Home Care has been honored with the 2024 Best of Home Care® awards from Home Care Pulse. These prestigious awards, Provider of Choice and Employer of Choice, are a testament to our unwavering commitment to our senior clients and caregivers.

The Provider of Choice Award is a recognition given to top-ranking home care providers based on client satisfaction scores. This affirms our dedication to the well-being and contentment of our seniors, ensuring they maintain their dignity and independence in the comfort of their homes.

Similarly, the Employer of Choice Award measures caregiver satisfaction scores. This award recognizes our nurturing and supportive environment for our caregivers, who are the cornerstone of the compassionate care we provide.

With these awards, we are reminded of the trust placed in us and our responsibility to create living situations where seniors thrive. We share these honors with you and the excellence you bring every day that inspires us all.

Sincerely,

Jacob Laffen
President, Co-Owner
Family Matters In-Home Care

Innovative Approaches to Cognitive Health

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- THE LATEST RESEARCH

Dementia care is witnessing a wave of innovation. The use of stimulating activities rooted in cutting-edge research challenge the brain and offer moments of joy and meaningful engagement.

Virtual Reality (VR) Therapy: Virtual Reality emerges as a powerful tool in cognitive stimulation therapy. Tailored VR experiences allow patients to navigate through three-dimensional reconstructions of places from their past. This multisensory engagement has been found to effectively stimulate memory recall and cognitive function. For instance, a study published in the *Journal of NeuroEngineering and Rehabilitation* demonstrated improved spatial orientation and recollection in participants following VR sessions.

Tailored Interactive Games: Personalized gaming experiences are gaining traction as a means to engage dementia patients in cognitive exercises. Developers are crafting games that incorporate personal elements from patients' lives, such as their favorite songs or significant personal events, to create a familiar and engaging context. Research indicates that these bespoke games can lead to better engagement and cognitive activity, as reported in *The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI is at the forefront of personalized care, with programs designed to adapt activities based on the individual's responses. This adaptive challenge is crucial in ensuring that the activities are neither too easy nor too difficult, providing a "just-right" level of cognitive stimulation that can lead to sustained engagement and potential improvements in cognitive functions.



Robotic Pets: Robotic pets are becoming a novel way to provide companionship and induce engagement without the responsibilities associated with animals. Studies, such as those cited in *The Gerontologist*, highlight how interacting with robotic pets can lead to increased verbal communication and social interaction among dementia patients, contributing positively to their cognitive health.

As these innovative activities demonstrate, there is a growing recognition of the importance of cognitive stimulation in dementia care. Combining immersive technologies and personalized activities represents a holistic approach to support mental health. It heralds a future where dementia care is not just about managing symptoms but about enhancing the overall well-being of patients, enabling them to connect with their surroundings, their past, and their loved ones in meaningful ways.

GOT ENERGY?

For a senior-friendly recipe, here's one that's nutritious and easy to prepare!

NO-BAKE PEANUT BUTTER OATMEAL BALLS:

These energy balls are simple to make, require no cooking, and can be a fun, collaborative activity. They're packed with protein and fiber, making them a healthy snack.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup natural peanut butter
- 1/3 cup honey or maple syrup
- 1/2 cup ground flax seeds
- 1/2 cup raisins or chocolate chips
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix the oats, peanut butter, honey or maple syrup, flax seeds, raisins or chocolate chips, and vanilla extract in a large bowl.
2. Stir until all ingredients are well combined.
3. Roll the mixture into balls, using about a tablespoon of the mixture for each.
4. Place the balls on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
5. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to set.

Memory Music Box

Music can trigger happy memories and emotions from the past, offering comfort and connection. For a fun and rewarding project, create a personalized music playlist for your client or loved one, consisting of songs that were popular in their younger days. To enhance the experience:

- Collect various songs from different periods of the person's life.
- Organize a listening session where you can play these songs.
- Encourage the person to share stories.
- Optionally, create a physical memory box with items related to the music, such as photos or memorabilia.

Here's a fun example for a person born in 1945, featuring songs from their teens and early twenties:

1960s Memory Music Box

"The Twist" by Chubby Checker (1960)

"I Want to Hold Your Hand" by The Beatles (1963)

"My Girl" by The Temptations (1964)

"(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" by The Rolling Stones (1965)

"Good Vibrations" by The Beach Boys (1966)

"Respect" by Aretha Franklin (1967)

The 1960s were a time of significant cultural and musical change. Encourage the people you care for to share stories from this exciting time and discover their hippie within!

TIPS FOR STAYING SOCIALLY CONNECTED



In our golden years, social connections are a source of joy and a cornerstone of health. Geriatric experts liken social isolation's impact on senior health to the harm caused by chronic smoking. Robust social ties can buffer against stress and decrease the risk of dementia.

Here are supportive ways for seniors to stay connected and engaged:

Inter-Generational Programs:

Initiatives that connect seniors with younger generations can bridge the social gap, providing fresh perspectives and reciprocal learning opportunities.

Social Transportation Services: For those with mobility issues, community-organized transportation can be a lifeline, offering access



to social events and medical appointments.

Pet Ownership: The companionship of a pet has been shown to reduce stress and increase social interaction, with the added benefit of imposing a beneficial routine of getting out for walks.

Social Hobby Groups: Whether it's gardening, book clubs, or crafting, shared interests can be the seeds for new friendships and community.

The synergy between social engagement and health is particularly potent for seniors. By adopting strategies to combat isolation, seniors can extend their lifespans and enhance the richness and fulfillment of their later years. Many towns and municipalities offer social programs for seniors. Check your local Council on Aging or City Hall for more information.



Carol's Corner

Family Matter's founder Carol Pardue-Spears stays in close touch with our caregivers and clients to make sure everyone is well cared for. Here, she answers some of the most frequent questions our clients ask.



Q:

My elderly parents feel overwhelmed by the deluge of information online. How can I help them find balance and peace of mind?

A. Your concern is both timely and universal. The digital age has turned into a double-edged sword, providing us with access to a wealth of information but also the potential for information overload, which can be incredibly taxing for our seniors.

Here are a few gentle strategies to help your parents better navigate a digital world:

Establish 'Tech-Free Times':

Encourage regular intervals during the day when digital devices are set aside. Use these moments for face-to-face interactions or engaging in hobbies that bring joy and relaxation.

Curate Content Together:

Dedicate some time to help your parent find online content that uplifts and educates rather than stresses. This can include light-hearted movies, educational lectures, or calming music playlists.

Promote Mindfulness

Practices: Introduce simple mindfulness exercises like deep breathing or meditation that can be done together, creating a routine that helps mitigate the effects of digital overload.

Digital Literacy: Sometimes the stress comes from not understanding how to control the technology they're using.

Offering to teach them how to use settings like "do not disturb," ad blockers, and "unsubscribe" from unwanted emails, can empower them.



Encourage Physical Activity:

Suggest regular walks or light exercise to break the cycle of continuous screen time.

Remember, the aim is to enable your parent to enjoy the benefits of technology while finding a healthy balance. It's all about moderation, education, and mindful engagement with the digital world.

As always, our Family Matters team is here to support you with resources and advice to navigate these modern-day challenges with your loved ones.



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Family Matters In-Home Care is proud to announce that we have once again received awards from *Home Care Pulse*, which conducts the annual Home Care Benchmarking Study, the most comprehensive survey of home care providers in North America. These awards include the 2024 Best of Home Care® and Best of Home Care Employer.

Thank you for your vote of confidence and trust with your loved ones. We are grateful to serve you and to create a supportive working environment for our employees.