



Alzheimer Society

CALGARY 30+  
years

Where community, insight and empowerment begin.

## Alzheimer Society of Calgary

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The Best Friends™ Approach



# The Best Friends™ Approach

A philosophy of person-centered, quality dementia care

Without advanced dementia-specific training, caring for people with dementia can be physically and emotionally challenging and exhausting, particularly due to dramatic changes in behaviour and personality. These changes make it particularly taxing for healthcare professionals to work with them and provide continued quality care. In addition to creating changes in behaviour and personality, dementia affects a person's ability to remember, learn new information, think, make decisions, communicate and even function independently as these diseases progress.

Many front-line staff working in care settings do not have the knowledge and training to address challenging behaviour changes related to dementia and provide quality care. This results in a diminished quality of life for care recipients and compounding stress and burnout for paid caregivers. One solution is to provide proactive, advanced, dementia-specific training to healthcare staff that focuses on best care practices, empowering them with practical strategies and tools to meet the diverse challenges of dementia care.

**The Best Friends™ Approach to Dementia Care** is a well-recognized, internationally acclaimed philosophy of care, developed by David Troxel & Virginia Bell in the 1980s and '90s. Best Friends™ is grounded in the understanding that relationships are critically important in dementia care and require the essential elements of friendship: **respect, empathy, support, trust, and humor.**

The Best Friends™ Approach is completely **person-centered**; easy to implement; culturally sensitive; flexible enough to adapt to all caregiving situations and settings; and has been endorsed in numerous evaluation studies for more than two decades.

“ I would recommend this workshop to anyone who is working with dementia patients; it really helped me to give the quality care the patients deserved.



# Benefits of being Best Friends™

This philosophy can be applied in any care setting

Staff members trained in the Best Friends™ Approach learn how to leverage a person's life story, personality, moods and problem-solving style to provide a better care experience. They also learn how to listen and communicate skilfully, initiate activities, and enhance the self-esteem of the person with dementia while building a strong trusting relationship with the person.

As a result, the person with dementia feels safe, secure and valued. This essential foundation enables professional and family caregivers to continue to create a positive and rewarding caregiving experience. Staff and families learn about the “knack” of providing great care - the art of doing difficult things with ease; preventing and reducing the occurrence of challenging behaviour changes; and thereby **reducing caregiver stress and burnout.**

**Give your team the knowledge and practical skills they need to succeed.**

The Best Friends™ program will provide you with:

- Effective caregiving strategies and best practices based on the renowned Best Friends™ model of care, applicable in any care setting
- Strategies for preventing and reducing aggression and challenging behaviours
- Effective communication techniques
- Methods for creating meaningful activities for a person living with dementia
- Certificate of achievement upon completion

“ The workshop was very beneficial to me when I was on the dementia unit. I did not realize how much the training would help until I was actually in a situation that I remembered some techniques to use from the “Best Friend” approach!



# Become a Best Friend™

Consider partnering with us

“...They gave me an opportunity to really experience “simulated” scenarios and to try out different strategies before practicing in “real-life” on the units. It gave great information and was presented accurately to meet the level of knowledge of the audience... I really hope we have this opportunity again for more workshops in the future!

## Local expertise

The Alzheimer Society of Calgary is a proud proponent and the exclusive licensee of the Best Friends™ Approach in Alberta. We are also pleased to offer Best Friends™ training opportunities across Canada.

## For more information, please contact:

Padmaja Genesh  
Learning Specialist, Alzheimer Society of Calgary  
403.290.0110  
[padmajag@alzheimercalgary.com](mailto:padmajag@alzheimercalgary.com)

# Thank you!

