

Alzheimer Society of Canada releases PC P.E.A.R.L.S.™

7 key elements to advance person-centred dementia care in long-term care

Toronto, ON, February 19, 2014 – Today, the Alzheimer Society of Canada is releasing new information to help promote person-centered care for people living with dementia in long-term care homes across Canada. PC P.E.A.R.L.S. are downloadable information sheets representing seven key elements that, when put into practice, help homes shift away from an institutional approach to a home-like model where staff, management, families and residents work together as a mutually supportive team.

PC P.E.A.R.L.S. include person and family engagement, care, processes, environment, activity and recreation, leadership and staffing and are based on research conducted in six homes: Delta View Life Enrichment Centres (British Columbia); Sherbrooke Community Centre (Saskatchewan); Fenelon Court and Union Villa Long-Term Care Home (Ontario); Donald Berman Maimonides Geriatric Centre (Quebec); and Northwood Care Halifax (Nova Scotia). The homes were selected using criteria developed by the Alzheimer Society, stakeholders from long-term care and experts in person-centred care. They are a representative sample of homes that are embracing culture change to provide individualized care to meet the evolving and complex needs of people with dementia and help them live to the best of their strengths and abilities.

“There is still no cure for Alzheimer’s disease and most people living with it will eventually need long-term care,” says Mary Schulz, Education Director at the Alzheimer Society who leads the Society’s culture change work. “But the good news is we can make their day-to-day life better, while supporting the staff who provide care and the families who put their faith and trust in the homes.”

PC P.E.A.R.L.S. describe each key element in detail with real-life examples that other long-term care homes can duplicate to make everything from physical spaces and recreational activities, to personal care and meal times more meaningful and engaging for people with dementia.

Most Canadians with dementia prefer to stay at home for as long as possible, but the reality is that 57 per cent of seniors living in a residential care home have a diagnosis of dementia,¹ and 70 per cent of all individuals diagnosed with dementia will die in a long-term care home.² With an aging population, the number of Canadians with dementia will reach 1.4 million in less than 20 years. Already, caring for a spouse, parent or friend takes an enormous toll on family caregivers who, by 2040, will be providing 1.4 billion unpaid hours per year.

“When we understand the lifelong values, wishes and personality of each individual with dementia, we can create an environment that supports and maintains their dignity and independence longer,” says Schulz.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada is working with government and industry leaders, researchers and clinical practitioners to make person-centred care the norm for people with dementia across all care settings. Long-term care homes and other health providers are invited to download PC P.E.A.R.L.S and learn more about culture change at www.alzheimer.ca/culturechange.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada thanks Extendicare Canada Inc. and Pfizer Canada Inc. for their unrestricted grants in support of its culture change work.

¹ Canadian Institute for Health Information, *Caring for Seniors with Alzheimer's Disease and Other Forms of Dementia*, August 2010.

² Mitchell S, et al.: *A national study of the location of death for older persons with dementia*. JAGS 2005, 53:299-305.

About the Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society is the leading nationwide health charity for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Active in communities right across Canada, the Society offers help for today through our programs and services, and hope for tomorrow by funding research into the cause, prevention and a cure.

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