

# The Fun Theory

## Transforming dementia care through person-based technology

Senior living leaders and professionals who are looking to improve clinical and quality of life outcomes for their residents are increasingly integrating person-centered engagement technology into their activities and therapy programming. There is a growing amount of anecdotal and quantitative evidence demonstrating that the successful implementation of engagement technology will improve the quality of life of residents living with dementia, and reduce the use of PRN antipsychotics. In addition, engagement technology can decrease social isolation by facilitating enriched resident-staff interactions and by providing easier access to family, friends and the world at large.

### Person-Environment Fit



As we age, it becomes more difficult to attain an optimal person-environment fit. Engagement technology is an innovative approach that provides older adults options that inspire autonomy, freedom from boredom, and opportunities for social integration and interactions. Person-based technology allows senior living residents with diverse backgrounds and personal histories to stay engaged by allowing activities and rehab professionals to focus on their interests, needs and strengths, as well as to encourage self-expression, creativity and continued personal development.

### Strength-Based Approach



Residents undergoing physical and cognitive decline often lack opportunities for success, which are essential in improving self-esteem, enhancing confidence and reducing isolation. Engagement technology allows senior living professionals to improve the quality of life and care of their residents in their care by focusing on their remaining strengths, instead of relying on labels; resolving challenges, such as depression, boredom and loneliness, with appropriate and compassionate solutions and activities; and fostering better relationships through individualized interactions.

### Preferred View



In our introspections and stories about ourselves we hold a preferred view of the self—how we wish or preferred to be seen by others. As individuals undergo cognitive decline, they increasingly experience a disconnect between their preferred view and how the world at large perceives and regards them. Person-centered engagement technology that is fun to use allows older adults to reconnect with a sense of self that is empowering, and senior living professionals to embrace the belief that well-being encompasses all the dimensions of personhood—mind, body and spirit.

Further reading:

<http://www.mcknights.com/jack-york/author/2989/> - a nice blog with wonderful stories of how person-centered engagement technology is improving the quality of life of senior living resident throughout the country.

<http://fpci.org/story/its-never-2-late/> - Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing's evaluation report on the integration of iN2L into their organization's activity programming.

*Mental wellness in aging: Strengths-based approaches.* Ronch, J. L. & Goldfield, JA. Baltimore, MD: Health Professions Press.

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