



Free Books to support independent reading and promote understanding of the pandemic.

- **Keeping safe in residential care settings during the Pandemic**
 - **Keeping safe at home during the pandemic**

UK Dementia Congress 2020

Both books reflect the guidance for England as set at Noon on 4th November 2020

Guidance for Reading with People Living with Dementia

These books are part of the *UK Dementia Care Book Club* and the *DementiAbility Carry on Reading Program*, Canada. The style, content, size of font and layout of the books have been written to support and enable a person living with dementia. The goal of these books is to help individuals at home and in care homes learn about the pandemic, including what they can do to stay safe and why things have changed, such as why families are not visiting, while also providing a memory support for those who forget these details and benefit from reading these materials as often as needed.

Books that follow specified criteria for aging and dementia (based on research of Dr Alan B. Stevens, Dr Cameron Camp and others) enable people living with dementia to continue to enjoy reading well into the later stages of cognitive impairment. Gail Elliot, Gerontologist and Dementia Specialist, helped to pioneer the “Carry on Reading” Book Club program and mentored Lynne Phair and Sally Dando to introduce book clubs for people living with dementia in the UK. An important feature of the book is the size, type of font, size of font and layout of the material (including such things as putting text on only one side of the page – and no unnecessary markings, such as pictures). These books have been tested in individual and group settings. They provide opportunities to stimulate memories, engage the brain, set people up for success, and, when in a group setting, facilitate social conversation and connection. Books are tested and reviewed by people living with dementia as part of the development process.

Sadly, there is a perception that people with dementia can no longer read. This is often untrue. The truth is, they may not be able to see the words (as they are too small) or follow the story (because it is too complex and/or has too many details to follow). If the book is written in a style, that enables a person to succeed, reading can enable abilities and add pleasure to each day.

Printing the books

Please print the books as doubled sided paper (rather than single sided). You will see that every other page is blank. This is so when the book is printed, there is only writing on the right-hand page. This is done to reduce the amount of information that the person can read at any time and reduce distractions. This will assist the person to succeed in reading and enjoying the book.

DementiAbility and Dementia and Supported Living- the Montessori Way

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How to use the books in a residential setting

Keeping Safe in Residential Care Settings During the Pandemic has been written for people living in residential settings in England. While it can be enjoyed in any UK country, please note that specific guidance may be different in each country, and may change as details about our understanding of the pandemic changes.

Ideally, a reading screen should be carried out to ensure the person can read and “see” the words on the page. Alternatively, you could ask if the person would like to read and let your observations guide you. If the person is struggling, simply ask if the words are too small. If they are unable to read and/or see the words on the page, you could invite the person to listen and join in the discussions that follow.

Guidelines for Holding A Book Club

Where to hold the book club.

- If possible, find a quiet location where people will not be disturbed. It is helpful to have a table to place the book on, but this is not essential. Comfortable chairs are preferable.

Size of the group

- There should be no more than 6 people in the group. The facilitator could be a staff member or another resident (as there are often residents who are quite able to take on this “Volunteer” role). During times that volunteers and family are available in the home, they could lead the group. However, during the pandemic this is unlikely.
- Each person must have his/her own copy of the book. This is to optimise concentration, engagement and the ability to follow along.

Facilitating the book club

Note: It is recommended that you read a book with each person individually, prior to attending to group. Some people may believe they can no longer read. Some are slow at first, but many read quite well after they have had an opportunity to start reading again, with books that are set up for success. This opportunity builds confidence for many.



1. Invite the person to join the group by asking, “*Would you like to join us for the book club?*” Do not tell the person to attend and do not suggest it is a type of therapy.
2. Sit around a table and welcome each person to the group.
3. Provide each person with a name badge. Use a large label and black marker and print the name in large enough font for everyone to see. Use the preferred name or title.
4. Ask everyone to turn to the first page and ask one person to begin to read.
5. Ask the person seated beside the first reader to read next and then continue by asking each person to take a turn reading.
6. If the person does not turn the page, gently ask, “*Would you like to turn the page and read the next page?*”
7. Stop to discuss the content of the book and encourage conversation when thoughts are triggered. If the group is reluctant to talk, ask open ended questions or give comment to stimulate group discussion, based on the content. It does not matter if the memories or thoughts are accurate, the purpose is to stimulate conversation, understanding and enjoyment.
8. Support the person in any way that will help him/her to feel he/she has succeeded. If the person cannot read a word, gauge whether to gently read it or allow the moment to pass. Enable people to read at their speed and resist the urge to read for them, unless you are sure they need help. The person may take time to process the information and read out loud. If anyone says he/she does not want to read, but just wants to follow along, that is just fine.
9. At the end of the book, thank everyone for joining the book club. Tell them how much you enjoyed it and ask “*Did you enjoy this?*” Or ask “*Would like to do it again some time?*”
10. You can invite the people to read the book as often as you feel it will help them understand the pandemic. It is often helpful to leave the COVID-19 book with individuals who benefit from ongoing reminders about what is going on and why.

Reading at home

“***Keeping Safe at Home During the Pandemic***” has been written for a person to read alone or with a family member. A family member may enjoy reading the book with his/her loved one, taking turns reading a page at a time. The book has been written for people living at home in England. It can be enjoyed in any UK country, but specific guidance may be different.

How to enjoy reading at home.

1. Choose a suitable time to invite the person to read the book and sit in a place he/she feels most comfortable for both of you.
2. If you do not live together, you both should have your own copy of the book to read, with the objective of observing physical distancing rules as you read.
3. If possible, sit on the person’s dominant side, at a slight angle next to them.



4. The book is set up for success and the experience should always be “failure free”. This means you should support the person in any way that will help them, NEVER saying they are wrong or correcting them, in a negative way, when reading.
5. Remember that the person may take time to read each page, as his/her brain might take time to process the information. Waiting patiently, and silently, is important. Reading the book is not a race. Offer assistance only when it is clearly needed.
6. Be sure to take time to discuss the content, when appropriate.
7. If the person shares “memories” that are not accurate, do not argue. The purpose is to stimulate conversation, understanding and enjoyment. Don’t ask if the person remembers what was said on earlier pages: it is not a test of memory or an exam! This is an opportunity to learn – and remember when possible.
8. At the end of the book thank the person for reading with you. Tell him/her how much you enjoyed reading with him/her and ask if he/she would like to do it again sometime.
9. Consider leaving the book on a coffee table or kitchen table for the person to grab and read whenever the interest in the book arises.

Our goal is to help people who are living with dementia to understand why their world is different at the moment and why we are doing things differently during this time of a global pandemic. The books offer a variety of details about COVID-19, which we endeavour to keep up to date. The books and also offer a memory support for those who need to be reminded of the details that may already have been shared – many times. We hope you find our resources useful.

Best wishes,

Lynne Phair and Gail Elliot

We would welcome any feedback from you and we will endeavour to update the books regularly. Updated versions will be free to download from our websites.

Please email

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DementiAbility and Dementia and Supported Living- the Montessori Way

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More free resources for activities, books and COVID-19 resources to enable understanding about the pandemic are available on.

www.dementiability.com

More information about the UK Dementia Book Club together with details of 16 book titles and can be found on

www.dementiathemontessorivay.co.uk

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www.milfordcare.co.uk