



*Communication Through the Creative  
Arts*

# COMMUNICATION

*“Art of Communication”  
consists of more than words*

*(Willoughby, 2013)*

# CREATIVE ARTS-BASED INTERACTIONS

*“In a creative moment, there are no rules and regulations. There is no right answer. There is not even a need to be right because every next moment promises another opportunity for renewal”*

*(Power, 2011)*

# OPENING MINDS THROUGH ART (OMA)

*Opening Minds through Art is an award-winning, evidenced-based, intergenerational art-making program for people with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of neurocognitive disorders.*

*(<https://www.scrippsoma.org>)*

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Director, Adult Day & Creative Programs



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Recreation Therapist

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## **Faculty/Presenter Disclosure**

- **Faculty/Presenter:** Ai Cada, Carlene Wagner
- **Relationships with commercial interests:**
  - **Grants/Research Support:** NA
  - **Speakers Bureau/Honoraria:** NA
  - **Consulting Fees:** None
  - **Other:** NA

# Content

- Opening Minds through Art (OMA)
  - What is OMA
  - Volunteer training
  - OMA process
  - Impact





Building bridges across age and cognitive barriers through art



**Dr. Elizabeth Lokon, *Founder***

*2007*

*Scripps Gerontology Center, Ohio Center of  
Excellence Miami University*

## Strength based and Person-centered approaches



## **Illness-centered Perspective:**

Person with **dementia**

## **Person-centered perspective:**

**Person** with dementia

## One to one interaction

- Promote social engagement
- Provide opportunities to build close relationship



## Choices are built in

- To promote autonomy and dignity
- To provide creative self-expression



# **Well –being Theory**

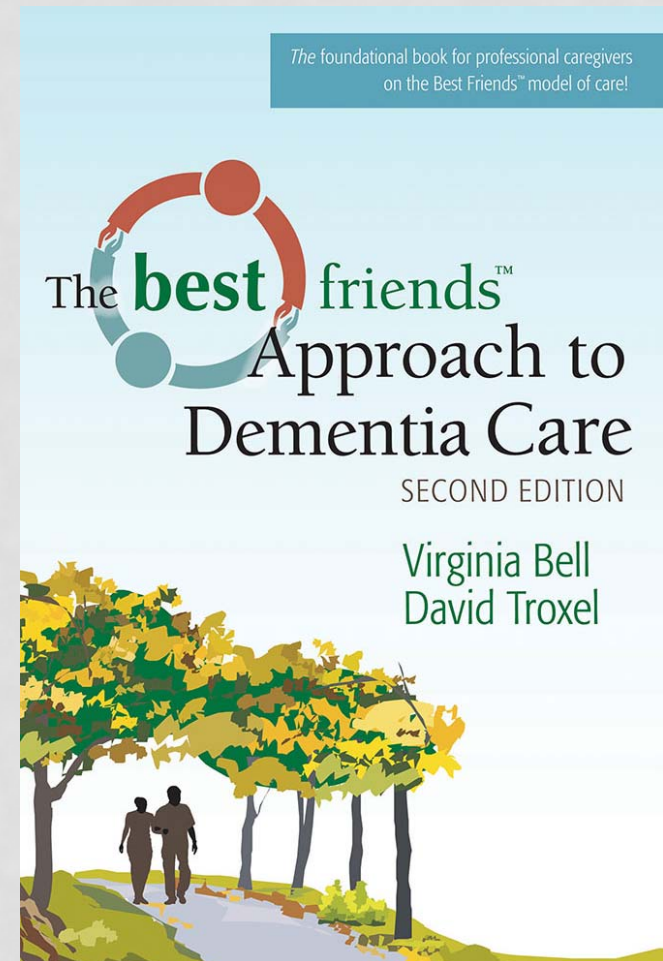
*Martin Seligman*

## **Components:**

- Positive emotions
- Engagement
- Relationship
- Meaningfulness
- Accomplishment

# Volunteer Training

- OMA
- Best Friends™ Approach
  - relationship is important
  - element of friendship
    - respect
    - empathy
    - support
    - trust
    - humour





- Playtime





## 4. Don't privilege intact cognition



# Emotional Contagion

(Strum, V.E. et al., 2013)

“The unconscious ability to mimic another person’s emotions.”

## **Findings** (Strum, V.E. et al., 2013) :

“As the disease progresses, destroying more brain cells and cognitive skills, this emotional empathy gets stronger, allowing patient to become more sensitive - and more vulnerable – to the feelings, words and behaviours of other people.”

# **OMA Creative Process**

1. The Huddle
2. Picking up partners
3. Social time
4. Opening song, clap and opening remarks
5. Inspiration
6. Distribution of supplies
7. The creative process
8. Signing work and giving title
9. Sharing work with others
10. Artist feedback and session evaluation
11. Closing song, clap and remarks
12. Taking partners back



**Art Show**

# Opening Minds Through Art Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DNMJg6VvWE&feature=youtu.be>

“As we become more emotional and less cognitive, it’s the way you talk to us, not what you say, that we will remember. We know the feeling, but don’t know the plot. **Your smile, your laugh and your touch** are what we will connect with. Empathy heals. ***Just love us as we are.*** We’re still here, in emotion and spirit. If only you could find us.”



Thank you!



# MUSIC

## “ALIVE INSIDE”

*“The creative and spontaneous nature of music is ideally suited for persons living with dementia as they often live in the present yet their strongest memories are those from the past”*

*(Robertson-Gillam, 2011)*

# MUSIC

## “ALIVE INSIDE”

(ORIGINAL) *ALIVE INSIDE* clip of HENRY:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIm0Qd4mP-I&feature=youtu.be>

## TAKE HOME MESSAGE

*“Never assume lack of understanding,  
always believe that communication is  
possible and remember to use more than  
words”*

*(Willoughby, 2012)*