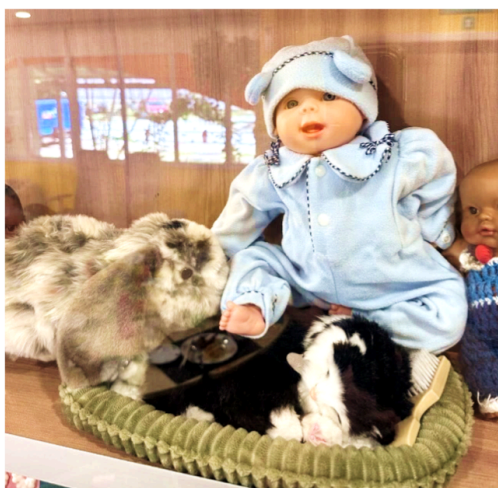


Familiar Things, Familiar Feelings

Dementia care has and will always have a heavy focus in how we structure our core services, especially at our daycare centres. With the implementation of the Butterfly Approach in full effect, our centres now look like a giant living room, decorated with common objects that are typically found in most people's homes. This helps our seniors feel that our facilities are simply an extension of their homes, easing their sense of disorientation whenever they have to leave the comfort of their homes for the care that they need.

Many of these household objects, which were kindly donated by staffs and volunteers, were chosen for its nostalgia inducing qualities. Some of these objects, like lamps, dolls and children's toys also play a significant role in Dementia care. Before the revamp, such objects tended to look out of place in an institutional, hospital-like setting. Now, these objects blend into the environment seamlessly, with our seniors feeling more comfortable in using them openly.



Many people who visit our centres show intrigue towards the purpose of dolls found in our centres, particularly when it comes to baby dolls. The dolls actually provide a great sense of comfort to our seniors, be it through sensory stimulation or evoking deep emotional memories associated with caregiving.

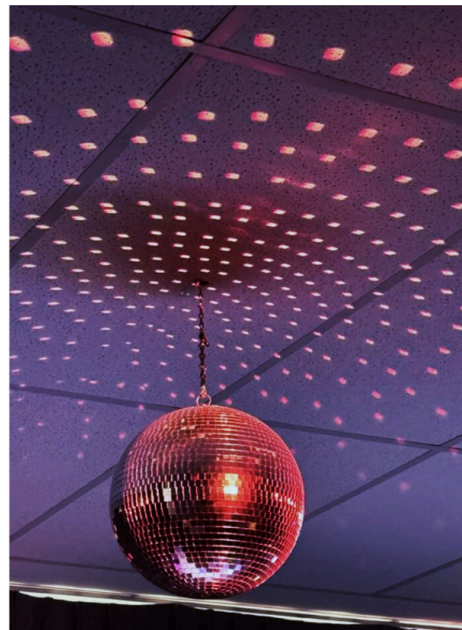
As parenthood or caretaking was likely a meaningful part of our seniors' identity at some point, these dolls help our seniors fulfil their longing for being protective and needed.

They might also just simply miss caregiving, and by patting the dolls, smiling at them, our seniors are able to re-live such moments of warmth and connection. While the interaction is symbolic, the emotional and psychological benefits are very real.

Another object that we keep within reach for our seniors are weighted blankets. Weighted blankets provide a gentle pressure, also known as deep touch simulation, which has a calming effect on our nervous systems. For our seniors who frequently deal with confusion and anxiety as part of their symptoms, the steady weight of the blanket helps keep them grounded and reduces their feelings of fear or disorientation.

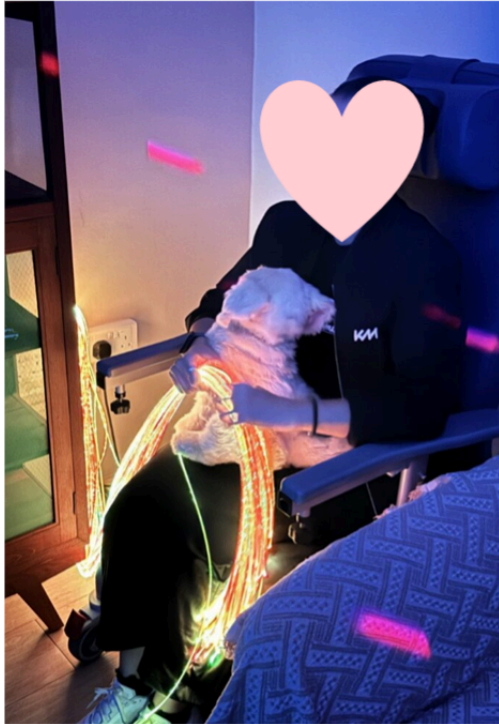
There is also something comforting about the way weighted blankets can mimic the sensation of a comforting hug. As dementia makes communication more difficult, many people will find themselves feeling lonely or disconnected. As such, wrapping themselves in a weighted blanket can offer our seniors a sense of safety and reassurance without any words needed.

As dementia progresses, it can get harder for the brain to handle busy or unpredictable sights and sounds. A lot of people living with dementia find lamps comforting, almost like a tiny light show just for them. Hence, you will find that our centres are equipped with different types of lamps, which are typically used to calm our seniors down. The soft motions, that is simple, slow, and visually consistent, can help to reduce anxiety or restlessness.



Our seniors particularly love the disco ball at SASCO@WestCoast, as it hits a sweet spot between keeping them calm and making sure that they are anything but bored.

If it fits, I sit



Now, what about the items that do not blend into a homely environment? As medically necessary, the importance of geriatric chairs is not disputable when it comes to any eldercare facility. To help with this, we have added some personal touches to our geriatric chairs by decorating it with familiar fabrics, cushions and plushies to name some examples.

There are many different types of chairs placed all over our centres, which gives our seniors the agency to choose where they want to sit. Being able to make such small choices in their day to day lives gives them a sense of autonomy and control, something that often feels diminished as dementia progresses.

Different chairs also meet different physical and sensory needs, while also letting our seniors know that their preferences matter. Some seniors may prefer a soft, cushioned chair when they want to relax, while at other times they may gravitate towards the geriatric chairs for better posture or support. Of course, there will still be some restrictions depending on their medical needs as advised by their geriatricians.



No matter what they choose, we hope that any senior who walks through our doors can find solace and a sense of belonging in the time that they spend here.

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