



Special Request

Sr Margaret Nelson who works with Notre Dame Hospice asked me about the possibility of expanding this to the pediatric population. Sr Margaret believes that this type of care can be transformational. I do not know anyone who is offering Namaste Care to infants and children. Please let me know (joycesimard@earthlink.net) if you are doing this or have ideas on expanding Namaste Care to the pediatric population.



Joyce Simard, MSW, is an Adjunct Associate Professor School of Nursing, University of Western Sydney Australia. She is also an internationally sought private geriatric consultant... [read more](#)



Articles

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[The Provider - Profile of the Day "Joyce Simard"](#)

Welcome!

So many of you sent positive comments about the first Namaste Care Newsletter; thank you! Of course I had great intentions of writing the second one at least by February and here it is April!



I do have a great excuse though for dragging my feet on the second newsletter and that is writing the second edition of my book *“The end-of-Life Namaste Care Program for People with Dementia”*. So much has changed since the first book was published. Some funny things like removing tape recorders and VHS tapes from the supply list! And then there are changes I had never anticipated when the first book was published. This edition will have a chapter on Namaste Care in assisted living communities. When the book was published in 2007, I did not think that Namaste Care would find a home in assisted living communities as most residents were admitted to nursing homes when they reached the advanced stage of Alzheimer’s disease. Now, many assisted living communities encourage “aging in place” and Namaste Care provides meaningful activities to residents who can no longer participate in traditional activity programs. I also never thought about adapting Namaste Care for hospice organizations or that it would be international. I am hopeful that the second edition with all of the new and updated material will be printed and ready by June. And another bit of technology; it will also be an e-book!



I n the second edition I have made some changes in the program based on the feedback I have received from people who are offering Namaste Care to their residents. Reports from nurses in some Arden Courts communities indicate that the increased intake of beverages has lowered urinary tract infections (UTI's) and skin tears. I am now suggesting that beverages are poured before the residents arrive. As soon as the resident is greeted and made comfortable in their chairs, they should be offered a beverage and then continuously offered sips during the time they are in Namaste Care. All team members could be helpful if they could come in to the Namaste Care room even for a few minutes and offer beverages. When state regulations allow families and volunteers to offer beverages, this would be a valuable service for them to do. Many times, families enjoy feeling worthwhile when they can do something for their loved one with advanced dementia. Families may also want to do whatever they can for residents who do not have families that visit often; they become surrogate families to them. Since the inception of our first Namaste Care program at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington, VT, every resident who has died is escorted to the hearse by at least one member of the care team. Their body is covered with a flag if they served in the armed forces or a quilt for everyone else. It is a ritual that has brought many positive comments from families, team members and residents who do not have significant memory loss.

Arden Court in Chagrin Falls, OH asked one of their caregivers to make a quilt for them and it is the most beautiful quilt I have ever seen. It has removable hearts sewn around the outside of the quilt and each staff person signs heart. If a staff person leaves, the heart is removed and another



is added.

Until recently I had been calling this ritual "After Death Care". I never really liked that term but could not come up with something I liked better. I literally woke up last week with the thought of changing that term to the "Final Farewell". Combined with the lovely quilts and goodbyes, the new name reflects the love and care that goes into the Namaste care program.

Last fall I visited a Sunrise community that had an interesting ritual. When a resident dies and is ready to leave the community, a soft whistle is played beckoning any team member who is available to line the corridor and staircase where the body passes on the way out of the community. They have found that their oriented residents like to be part of this ritual and they gather at the base of the staircase and hold their hands over their hearts as the body passes by. Residents like to know that when it is their time to leave, they will be honored in the same way.

New Namaste Ideas

- Holly Desrosiers, a Life Enrichment Director I have worked with for many years, sent me this idea: She keeps face cloths moistened and warm by placing them in a large crockpot. Residents love the feeling of the warm moist facecloth gently caressing their face. The crockpot has been approved by the maintenance department and is out of the reach of any resident.
- Karen Roberts, VP of Clinical Services for EPOCH Senior Living sent me this idea. One family of a resident with dementia took a picture of the view their loved one saw when she sat in her favorite chair at home and looked out of the window. The families blew it up so it was poster size and hung it on the wall in her room at the nursing facility. It seemed to bring the resident a lot of comfort.

- Mary Longtin, the first Namaste Carer in the VA Home in Bennington, VT, and who is ten years later still offering amazingly creative moments in Namaste Care, sent me this idea: Namaste GARDEN TIME includes our Namaste Care veterans and some others who just need a quiet atmosphere. Plants are put on movable stands for Veteran to water, smell, or just touch. Sometime they even pluck the dead leaves off. Floral videos are played with calming music and bird sounds in the background or summer night time crickets' sounds. As always, thank you Mary for your devotion to the veterans.



- Beth Strait CTRS, CDP Director of Life Enrichment and Volunteer Services at Yorkshire & Stonebridge Manors in Walker, MI has her staff toss balloons and wave brightly colored scarfs in the air to stimulate residents before lunch. Another favorite activity during this very snowy winter and spring was to offer residents a chance to make a snowman! (Joyce says: I love the idea of bringing the outside inside!)

Joyce's Tips

- One of my "campaigns" has been to have staff wear name tags that are easy for our residents to read. Most companies want the staff person's entire name and position along with the company logo. Our residents have a difficult time determining the name of the person. I suggest that in addition to the "official" one, staff wear a large (3x2 with rounded edges), the first name in black with large font. Residents can actually read them! One company that has made them for me is Architectural Signage Systems, Inc. 113 First Avenue SW Lutz, Fl. 33548, tel. 813-949-8236, e-mail linda@assitampa.com.
- Remember, during the morning session of Namaste Care about 15 or 20 minutes before lunch we need to wake up residents to prepare them for lunch. Lights should be turned up, soothing music replaced by Big Band sounds or Broadway musicals and sensory stimulation items showed to residents. They should reflect the season or an upcoming

holiday or just be fun, like blowing bubbles. In the spring residents may relate to sprigs of forsythia, daffodils and lilacs. Whatever blooms in the spring will bring smiles from our residents. If you live in Australia, however, its fall and colorful fall leaves are in abundance.

I welcome your ideas so please send them to me for the next newsletters. Photos are also appreciated when approved by families.

The next newsletter will not take so long to assemble. The book will be finished and I will be off to London for a Care Home Conference “Celebrating Care Home 2013” May 9 & 10.

<http://www.stchristophers.org.uk/celebrating-care-homes> and several workshops. If you live in the UK, please e-mail me if you would like the date a location of my appearances.

The 13th Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care will take place in Prague, Czech Republic from May30-June 2, 2013. One of the preconference workshops will be on Namaste Care.

And so another year is racing by and it began with an incredible honor, a first for me. One of the most respected healthcare magazines *Provider* named me as one of “[20 to Watch](#)” in 2013. I was recognized for leadership in end-of-life care; the Namaste Care Program. And, I keep thinking life cannot get any more exciting!

I will end this with another special gift in my life, and that is something from my husband Ladislav Volicer, a very famous physician/researcher who did some of the first research on quality of life for people with advanced dementia. Ladi bought me a gift for our anniversary that sits on my desk with a message that resonates with me and perhaps with you. It is a quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson “Don’t go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path...and leave a trail”.

And so my friends, leave a trail.

Namaste,
Joyce



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I've taken the plunge and turned my email list into my first-ever official newsletter :) Enjoy!

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