An Overview of

The Best Friends™ Approach to Dementia Care

Developed by
Virginia Bell and David Troxel
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Description

Caregivers worldwide have adopted the groundbreaking and uplifting Best Friends™ method for the care of people with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. This comprehensive approach is grounded in the understanding that relationships are supremely important in dementia care and that they require the essential elements of friendship: respect, empathy, support, trust, humor. These are the building blocks of a replicable, effective care model that is person centered and easy for staff to embrace. The Best Friends™ approach is a relationship-based model of dementia care that is flexible enough to adapt to each person’s remaining strengths and abilities.

From the 1997 publication of the first book, The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer’s Care, to the publication in 2016 of a major update, The Best Friends Approach to Dementia Care, Second Edition, this compassionate model of care has gained global respect and demonstrated meaningful outcomes. Tens of thousands of copies of the Best Friends™ books (see “Products”) have been sold, and the Best Friends™ model is used to provide quality memory care across the U.S. and in European, Asian, Middle Eastern, and South American countries.

Several key elements are hallmarks of the Best Friends™ approach.

Key Elements

The Best Friends™ Dementia Bill of Rights: This universal touchstone for Alzheimer’s care programs around the world was drafted by Best Friends™ developers Virginia Bell and David Troxel to reflect the underlying core principles of their philosophy, stressing compassion, empathy, and respect in the face of a devastating disease. These 12 principles are the organizational underpinnings of Best Friends™.

Every person diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementia deserves:

- To be informed of one’s diagnosis
- To have appropriate, ongoing medical care
- To be treated as an adult, listened to, and afforded respect for one’s feelings and point of view
- To be with individuals who know one’s life story, including cultural and spiritual traditions
- To experience meaningful engagement throughout the day
- To live in a safe and stimulating environment
- To be outdoors on a regular basis
- To be free from psychotropic medications whenever possible
- To have welcomed physical contact, including hugging, caressing, and handholding
- To be an advocate for oneself and for others
✓ To be part of a local, global, or online community
✓ To have care partners well trained in dementia care


The Best Friends™ Daily Planner features one of these principles for each month of the year and provides tips and reminders for guiding care in the Best Friends™ way.

**Life Story:** Also at the core of Best Friends™ is the understanding that good dementia care begins with acknowledgment of a person’s life story. Because people with dementia often can no longer tell us their histories, care partners must become their biographers, even if it means becoming a good detective. The more a care partner knows about a person, the more he or she can use the Life Story to improve interactions and care, including

✓ Greeting the person and improving recognition
✓ Introducing the person to others
✓ Reminiscing
✓ Improving communication through clues and cues
✓ Designing appropriate activities
✓ Pointing out past accomplishments
✓ Helping to prevent challenging behaviors
✓ Incorporating past daily rituals
✓ Broadening the caregiving network and resources

**Knack:** Defined as “the art of doing difficult things with ease,” the Knack represents an attitude and set of skills that guarantee the success of the Best Friends™ approach.

Having the Knack entails

**Knowledge:** understanding Alzheimer’s disease and the experience of the person with the disease

**Nurturing:** through the Life Story, making care relevant to each person

**Approach:** effective communication with the person with dementia

**Community:** facilitating successful activities

**Kinship:** including family and friends in the care program*

* Source: The KNACK Learning Framework™ from the licensed Best Friends™ Approach Associate Trainer Program created by Alzheimer Society Calgary (Canada).

The elements of Knack central to the Best Friends™ approach include:

✓ Being well informed
✓ Having empathy
✓ Respecting the basic rights of the person
✓ Maintaining caregiving integrity
✓ Employing finesse
✓ Knowing it is easier to get forgiveness than to get permission
✓ Using common sense
✓ Communicating skillfully
✓ Maintaining optimism
✓ Setting realistic expectations
✓ Using humor
✓ Employing spontaneity
✓ Maintaining patience
✓ Developing flexibility
✓ Staying focused
✓ Being nonjudgmental
✓ Valuing the moment
✓ Maintaining self-confidence
✓ Using cueing tied to the Life Story
✓ Taking care of oneself
✓ Planning ahead

Communication: The Best Friends™ philosophy of communication is grounded in a set of core principles:

✓ Remember the basics of good communication
✓ Understand the person’s desire to communicate
✓ Make a good first impression
✓ Create an environment that facilitates good communication
✓ Treat the person as an adult
✓ Maintain caregiving integrity
✓ Respond to emotional needs
✓ Remember the importance of nonverbal communication
✓ Remember that behaviors communicate a message
✓ Do not take the person too literally
✓ Employ good timing
✓ Use repetition to facilitate better communication
✓ Do not argue or confront
✓ Screen out troubling messages or news
✓ Speak using positive language
✓ Employ humor in communication
✓ Do most of the work
World-Renowned Developers and Authors

Virginia Bell, M.S.W., and David Troxel, M.P.H.

Virginia Bell and David Troxel are recognized internationally for their groundbreaking and innovative work helping people with dementia, their families, and professional care partners. With decades of experience working in university, community, and adult day center settings, they have pioneered the development of an effective, meaningful model of dementia care in the Best Friends™ philosophy.

Virginia Bell, M.S.W., is a pioneer in the dementia care field, having founded one of the first dementia-specific adult day programs, the award-winning Helping Hand Adult Day Center (funded in part through the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation). Since opening its doors in 1984, it has served as a model for many other programs nationally. After being renamed the Best Friends™ Adult Day Center, it also became a “teaching-learning center” for social work, nursing, and medical students from the University of Kentucky. Bell has published numerous journal articles and book chapters, and she has co-authored six books with David Troxel and continues to work on other projects to expand Best Friends™. She has been recognized at the regional, state, and national levels for her leadership and good works, including prestigious awards from the American Society on Aging, the University and the state of Kentucky, and the national Alzheimer’s Association, and she has served on two Governor’s task forces on aging and Alzheimer’s disease. Bell has been a Program Consultant for the Greater Kentucky Southern Indiana Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association and has lectured about the Best Friends™ approach in more than 30 countries, including presentations for more than 25 Alzheimer’s Disease International conferences.

David Troxel, M.P.H., is a consultant about dementia across the continuum of aging care. He served for a decade as President and CEO of the California Central Coast Alzheimer’s Association, Santa Barbara, California (1994–2004), and was previously Executive Director for the Lexington/Bluegrass Chapter (KY) of the Alzheimer’s Association. Together with Virginia Bell, he won an unprecedented four Excellence in Program Award from the national Alzheimer’s Association for his chapter’s patient and family programs. Troxel sat on the Executive Board of the American Public Health Association as well as the Ethics Advisory Panel of the national Alzheimer’s Association. He also has first-hand experience as a care partner to his mother, Dorothy, who passed away from Alzheimer’s disease in 2008 after a 10-year journey with the Alzheimer’s disease. Troxel is a popular speaker for regional and national events and is known worldwide for his writing and teaching in the fields of Alzheimer’s and long-term care. He has co-authored six books with Virginia Bell, continues to work on other projects to expand Best Friends™, and has written numerous articles relating to Alzheimer’s care, staff development, and training. Troxel travels extensively as he consults with providers and organizations interested in improving dementia care and implementing culture change through the Best Friends™ approach.
Collaborators

Bell and Troxel have included two distinguished colleagues as contributing authors in their written works to further the development and dissemination of the Best Friends™ approach to Alzheimer’s care.

**Tonya M. Cox, M.S.W.,** is Executive Director for The Homeplace at Midway, a new Green House® community owned by Christian Care Communities, Inc. Her previous responsibilities as Director of Community Based Services for Christian Care included training and sustaining the Best Friends™ approach and overseeing the original Best Friends™ Adult Day Center in Lexington, Kentucky. She has also served as Vice President for Mission and Service for the Greater Kentucky/Southern Indiana Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association, and for more than 15 years has been developing programs and services for persons with dementia and their caregivers, including working on national curriculum development for professional caregivers in various care settings. Cox presents locally and nationally on activity programming and dementia care. She is a co-author on two of the Best Friends™ books (*The Best Friends Book of Alzheimer’s Activities, Volume One* and *Volume Two*) and contributed to *The Best Friends Approach to Dementia Care, Second Edition*, with Virginia Bell and David Troxel. She has served as co-chair of the Kentucky Alzheimer’s Disease Advisory Council and is a practicum supervisor for both the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville Kent School of Social Work.

**Robin Hamon, M.S.W.,** is Family Support Coordinator for the Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center at the University of Kentucky Sanders Brown Center on Aging. She worked with the Alzheimer’s Association Lexington/Bluegrass Chapter for 11 years. During her tenure as program manager for the Helping Hand Day Center, she developed a creative arts training program for staff and volunteers working with persons with dementia. Her special interests are in training and providing creative arts experiences for persons with dementia. Hamon is a co-author of *The Best Friends Book of Alzheimer’s Activities, Volume One* and *Volume Two*.

**Expert Leaders for Master Trainer Certification**

Virginia Bell, David Troxel, Tonya Cox, and Cindy Lilly are designated Expert Leaders in the provision of Best Friends™ Master Trainer certification. Only Expert Leaders can train others to become certified Master Trainers, who in turn are qualified to provide basic training in the Best Friends™ Approach to others.

**Cynthia Lilly, M.S.W.,** is a recognized dementia/memory care consultant, trainer, educator, and speaker, who has advocated and promoted the Best Friends™ approach to dementia care throughout a career spanning more than 30 years. She has trained, coached, and mentored hundreds of professional and family caregivers across the United States, and is also experienced in space planning and design, program development, and facility operations. She led the conception, design, and implementation of Atria Senior Living’s Dementia Care Program (2006–2014), which received national and international recognition for creative programming. Lilly has presented on the subjects of dementia and active adult programming at national and international conferences, including the International Conference on Active Aging, Pioneer...
Network Conference, and Alzheimer’s Disease International Conference. As a dedicated advocate for persons with dementia, she embraces the challenges of quality dementia care and derives great satisfaction from motivating and training others to excel in the delivery of care.

The Guidelines on certification are available as a helpful PDF download at [www.healthpropress.com/bfai](http://www.healthpropress.com/bfai)
Best Friends™ Online

There are several ways to learn about the Best Friends™ approach and keep up with news, events, and new products:

Best Friends™ Portal

An online Best Friends™ Portal (http://bestfriends.healthpropress.com) provides access to valuable background and information about this life-affirming approach. The Portal includes downloadable and printable information on the Best Friends™ approach, description of the entire Best Friends™ product line, a Best Friends in Action section (with videos and other helpful demonstrations of the effectiveness of using Best Friends), and more. Information on Best Friends™ Approach Institutes and other options for trainings is also available to provide options for learning more about Best Friends™.

The Best Friends™ Portal is also the gateway for certified Best Friends™ Master Trainers to access training materials, tips, and tools prepared exclusively for their use. Master Trainers receive a login that enables them to access and download images, handouts, PowerPoint slides, modules on topical issues (like approaches to managing behaviors), and other helpful materials for use in their own training and staff development programs.

Facebook and Other Social Media

News and helpful information about Best Friends™ can be found on two Facebook pages and through a variety of other social media outlets.

An active community of Best Friends™ advocates follows the Best Friends™ Facebook page (www.facebook.com/bestfriendsapproach), where up-to-date information on Alzheimer’s disease, caregiving, and aging-related topics can be found along with important news and events. Additionally, Best Friends™ is covered on HPP’s general Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/healthpropress), where you’ll also find updates about how people are using Best Friends™ and announcements about new materials.

Follow Health Professions Press on Twitter (https://twitter.com/healthpropress) at @HealthProPress and @BFApp for information on new developments in the use of Best Friends, new products, and more, as well as relevant information on dementia care.

HPP’s LinkedIn account offers helpful information on a variety of topics (https://www.linkedin.com/company/health-professions-press). It is also possible to access the SlideShares created by HPP. For example, one slide show describes what Best Friends™ is (https://lnkd.in/dB-XFQh) and another presentation provides a review of the Best Friends™ elements of friendship in dementia care (https://lnkd.in/dci6Td). More material is periodically added, both newly created SlideShares and links to additional relevant resources and content.
Visit HPP’s SlideShare (http://www.slideshare.net/HealthProPress) to find slide shows and presentation materials that can be viewed, downloaded, and reused for your own purposes. These slide decks include presentations that describe the Best Friends™ approach to dementia care and explore the various elements of the Best Friends™ approach. These materials can be used to introduce others to the Best Friends™ philosophy and the benefits of this model of care. Two of these slide shows provide good starting points for helping others learn about the Best Friends™ approach:


Best Friends™ Website

The Best Friends™ website (http://bestfriendsapproach.com) is a vibrant platform for providing information about the authors’ travel, consultation, and speaking engagements. It also serves as a conduit for providing information about the Best Friends™ philosophy of dementia care to a broad, international audience of family and professional care partners. Visitors can find a variety of helpful materials as well as links to product resources and social media in which the authors participate.
Success with the Best Friends™ Approach

Endorsements

“The Best Friends philosophy, rich in relationships and engagement, and respectful of human rights, provides a lasting foundation for dementia friendly communities and quality care.”

Marc Wortmann, Executive Director,
Alzheimer’s Disease International

“Best Friends is helping to establish ourselves as a center of excellence in dementia care throughout our region.”

Dan Lavender, President & CEO, Moorings Park, Naples, FL

“We embrace the Best Friends philosophy in all our Life Guidance® memory care neighborhoods across the United States. This new edition of the classic Best Friends book is full of contemporary best practices and practical tips for successfully navigating the challenges of dementia care. It will be a valuable resource for our staff as we encourage relationships and meaningful activities to create a successful day.”

Tom Alaimo, Vice President, Memory Care Operations (Life Guidance®), Atria Senior Living, Louisville, KY

“The Best Friends™ philosophy has changed the face of dementia over the last two decades.”

Amelia Schafer, M.S., Vice President of Programs, Alzheimer’s Association, Colorado Chapter

“Living with memory loss can be a very frightening journey, but when surrounded by Best Friends who help you continue to engage in life, the journey can still have many moments of joy.”

Joyce Simard, M.S.W., Geriatric Consultant, Associate Professor, Western Sydney University, and author of The End-of-Life Namaste Care™ Program for People with Dementia

“Bell and Troxel’s Best Friends™ approach affirmed the primary importance of relationship in supporting well-being for people living with dementia. It is… a classic and time-honored model for engagement and care.”

G. Allen Power, M.D., FACP, author of Dementia Beyond Drugs and Dementia Beyond Disease

“The Best Friends books have become our go-to resource for ideas and inspirations about quality dementia care. This new edition raises the bar as it challenges us to develop authentic relationships and meaningful activities and to create outstanding programs.”

Dina Newsom, Expressions™ Product Manager,
Prestige Senior Living, Vancouver, WA
“[The Best Friends approach has] changed the history of dementia care in our country since Best Friends is now included in the developing Dementia Strategy of Hungary!”

Zsuzsa Kovacsics, M.S.W., Administrator, Máriaremte Nursing Home, Budapest, Hungary

“Bell and Troxel, in their inspiring book, . . . have shown me the way home and given me new confidence that I am not alone, that I don’t have to fight Alzheimer’s myself. . . . [They] are partners who can lead.”


“The Best Friends approach really works, attracting volunteers and building a fantastic day of activities and engagement. Our day center participants . . . have felt known, loved, and valued, as have I.”

Linda Rector, volunteer, Best Friends™ Day Center, Lexington, KY

“The Best Friends™ method is an innovative, sensitive and unique approach that can greatly improve the quality of life for patients with the most devastating disease known to man.”

William R. Markesbery, M.D. (deceased), past director, Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center and Sanders-Brown Center on Aging, University of Kentucky

“Bell and Troxel . . . argue persuasively that the proper metaphor for organizing our thinking in this area is not the distant clinical reserve of the professional but the open and engaged warmth of a best friend....”

William H. Thomas, M.D., founder, The Eden Alternative

“Using the Best Friends approach . . . caregivers are provided with a wide range of practical tools and strategies for how to deal with the many challenges of coping with this difficult disease.”

Ken Dychtwald, Ph.D., CEO and founder of Age Wave

“Virginia Bell & David Troxel are leaders in the field of aging. Their words will offer caregivers new ideas and new hope as they face the challenge of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.”

Gloria H. Cavanaugh, former President & CEO, American Society on Aging

“The Best Friends™ philosophy . . . has been adopted as a model throughout Maine and has become one of our most valuable caregiving resources. We’ve seen it in action and heartily recommend it!”

Eleanor Goldberg, past Executive Director, Maine Alzheimer’s Association

“Thousands of families have read this book. By putting into practice what they learned, they have discovered that much can be done to improve the lives of their loved ones.”

Lilia Mendoza, Founder, Federación Mexicana de Alzheimer
Published Reviews

“Impressive and refreshing due to the relaxed and natural ‘hands on’ approach - an empowering book that proves one can enjoy life after a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease.”

*Aging & Society* (on *The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer’s Care*)

“One of the first, and still one of my favorites [positive, uplifting books on Alzheimer’s disease]... easy to grasp and always respectful of the person with the disease.”

*Alzheimer’s Care Quarterly* (on *The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer’s Care*)

“Here at last are two compassionate, humorous, experienced authors [Bell and Troxel] who say it’s time to stop being morbid and negative about AD. ...It’s the best training guide for families and professionals in print.”

*Wiser Now* (on *The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer’s Care*)

“[Bell and Troxel] have laid out a way of relating that is immediately accessible to all involved in dementia and a policy and programme for service provision. ...Here is an initiative that is easy to understand and is within the immediate capacity of each of us to deliver.”

*Journal of Dementia Care* (on *The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer’s Care*)

“a valuable addition to any day centre or care home wanting to develop understanding of activity as being much more than providing entertainment and outings.”

*Journal of Dementia Care* (on *The Best Friends Book of Alzheimer’s Activities, Volume One*)

“A ‘grab and go’ book that was written to assist an activity director to take an everyday activity and turn it into something creative and meaningful. [The book] presents activity principles which are essential in developing programs that are appropriate and creative in maintaining dignity and quality of life.”

*The Director* (on *The Best Friends Book of Alzheimer’s Activities, Volume One*)

“This collection of activities will add both meaning and enjoyment—Individuals with dementia, staff, and family members will enjoy the fresh ideas.... *The Best Friends Book of Alzheimer’s Activities, Volume Two*, is extremely helpful, and a book that you will reference often. Individuals with dementia, staff, and family members will enjoy the fresh ideas for creative art projects, interactive games, and evening activities...”

*Creative Forecasting® Magazine* (on *The Best Friends Book of Alzheimer’s Activities, Volume Two*)

Media Coverage

Virginia Bell, David Troxel, and the Best Friends™ approach to dementia care have captured the interest of journalists and freelance writers, and stories of the value of Best Friends™ care have been featured in numerous articles and interviews by reporters for a range of print and other media. Some of these features have appeared in NBC Nightly News, the *Los Angeles Times*,...
The Sacramento Bee, Lexington Herald-Leader, Lincoln Journal Star, Kentucky Public Radio, KV1 Radio Seattle, and numerous local media outlets and educational radio/television stations. Additionally, a variety of newsletters and magazines have featured articles on the Best Friends™ approach and reprinted excerpts from the books, including the Journal of Active Aging, Alzheimer’s Care Quarterly, The American Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias, and Caring magazine.

Best Friends even made it to Hollywood! Actress Julianne Moore has a copy of The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer’s Care next to her laptop in the 2014 movie Still Alice, based on the book by Lisa Genova about a professor, wife, and mother with younger-onset dementia. When she won the Academy Award for her performance, she gracefully acknowledged the need for a greater focus on persons living with dementia and the importance of research to find a cure.


Research Studies and Implementation Initiatives

The Best Friends™ philosophy of care has been successfully applied in many caregiving settings and evaluated within a diverse number of programs. Here are some examples.

An Administration on Aging (AoA)–funded study (Danner & McGuire, 2010, Alzheimer’s Care Today) compared adult day center staff who were trained in the Best Friends™ approach to staff members without Best Friends™ training and found that introduction of this model of care for individuals with dementia not only was valuable but also delayed long-term residential placements.

Study results included the following: “When asked specific questions related to the effectiveness of the program in making participants feel cheerful, energetic, content, lively, and anticipatory, [the study center] received higher ratings on all items [than the control center]. Similarly, when asked how effective the program was in minimizing the negative responses of anxiety, frustration, distress, irritation, and feeling of being fed up, [the study center] received much higher ratings in all categories” (p. 240).

When the Alzheimer’s Association launched its Campaign for Quality Residential Care (2005), co-director Peter Reed was quoted as having been inspired to launch the initiative after having volunteered under Virginia Bell and sharing a commitment to the Best Friends™ key element to “know the person first.”

The Alzheimer Society of Calgary, a licensed provider of Best Friends™ training to professional caregivers since 2003, concluded in a 2006 survey: “Evaluation results demonstrate how the Best Friends™ Approach Associate Trainer Program achieved positive results toward effecting
change within organizations concerned with improving the quality of life of people with dementia” and “100% of respondents stated that the Best Friends™ approach has improved the delivery of care to persons with dementia.”

When American Baptist Homes of the West (ABHOW) sought CARF-CCAC accreditation, it partnered with David Troxel for guidance in the implementation of the Best Friends™ model of care so that its Grove memory care units could secure accreditation in dementia care (see entry under Licensed Uses later in this report). ABHOW was the first multi-site company in the U.S. to seek such accreditation for a dementia care program. Its memory care units consistently earned some of the highest scores in the evaluation process (2008).

In Michigan, Heritage Community of Kalamazoo undertook culture change beginning in 2006 by adopting the Best Friends™ approach. One hallmark of its continuing success is introducing all members of the community to Best Friends™. Courtney Way, R.N., Training and Development Manager, reported “Heritage has trained security guards, housekeepers, servers, and many nontraditional individuals, encouraging them to be Best Friends champions. The response to this approach, through comments and letters from friends and their families, has been amazing.”

An evaluation study of Best Friends™ training in Maine (2002) reported results from 23 of 25 pilot-site participants including: staff felt more comfortable with communicating with residents with Alzheimer’s disease after training and reported that residents seem less stressed; a number of facilities incorporated Best Friends™ principles into their orientation programs; pilot sites noticed a distinct difference in the positive way training participants interacted with residents compared to staff who did not take the training; and families felt more involved in the ongoing care of their loved one and appreciated that staff were looking for new ways to help.

At Moorings Park in Naples, Florida, implementing the Best Friends™ approach began in 2013 with the Best Friends™ Master Trainer certification of a group of staff members, followed by formation of a Best Friends committee to work across the various levels of care. With regular meetings and monthly themes, the team stayed focused on the project and supported shared accountability. Now, “residents with dementia who weren’t participating in activities are more fully engaged, and staff report that behaviors have declined and cooperation and happiness have increased” (Celeste Lynch, Director of Wellness). CARF-CCAC accredited, Moorings Park is the only A+ S&P and Fitch rated CCRC in the country.

The Plaza Assisted Living—voted Hawaii’s Best Senior Living Facility for 3 years in a row (2014–2016)—began a new initiative for program improvements with consultative services from David Troxel in 2015, followed by an on-site Best Friends™ Master Trainer certification course in 2016 for selected staff from its five communities. This they followed with the launch of an enhanced memory care program, Hali‘aSM [Celebrating Cherished Memories], based on the internationally recognized ‘Best Friends™’ model of dementia care.” At The Plaza, the “staff on the Hali‘a neighborhood do more than take care of residents, they are Best Friends.”
At Prestige Care in Vancouver, Washington, the Best Friends philosophy has been influential in the development of their proprietary dementia care program, Expressions, begun in 2009 with consultation from Best Friends co-developer David Troxel. Hollie Fowler, Senior Director of Product and Brand Development, says that “The group process supported buy-in, fostered creativity, and allowed us to hit some key elements like Life Story out of the ballpark.” In 2012, Prestige won an ICAA (International Council on Active Aging) Innovators Award for their work in Expressions.

In its ongoing commitment to the Best Friends™ model, Touchmark Senior Living has coordinated with HPP to provide two on-site Best Friends™ Master Trainer certification courses for its staff over 3 years in order to put these life-affirming practices to work throughout their organization and ensure all Touchmark communities are certified Best Friends™ Environments. The core elements of the Best Friends™ approach are infused into the language, values, and practices of all Touchmark communities, and the approach is a defining feature distinguishing Touchmark from its competitors.

Special Programs Built on Best Friends™

Across the U.S. and Canada, and even in other countries, state-level programs, health care agencies, and individual corporations have sought and been granted permission by Health Professions Press to create special programs featuring the Best Friends™ approach. Groups are encouraged to contact HPP if they are interested in exploring opportunities to customize initiatives using the Best Friends™ work and materials. The association of an organization’s program with the Best Friends™ brand can augment the high quality of the program’s offering, enhance outcomes for staff and families, and add to the attractiveness of the program for consumers.

Past and present ways in which respected programs have applied the Best Friends™ approach in their initiatives after entering into agreements with HPP are briefly described below. Contact HPP (see final page) if you are interested in licensing Best Friends™ products or services.

State of Oregon (Senior & Disabled Services Division, Department of Human Resources)

- Statewide initiative to train nursing home staff; included premium book sales customized by HPP, permission to develop program-specific training manuals as adapted by the authors from the original Best Friends™ works, and merchandising rights to use the Best Friends™ logo.

State of Maine (Office of Elder Services, Department of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with the Maine Alzheimer’s Association)

- Statewide training offered to nursing homes; written into Maine’s State Plan on Aging; additional licensing of permission for Best Friends™ logo use on staff clothing.
Alzheimer Society of Calgary, Canada

✓ Only authorized center in Canada for Best Friends™ training using licensed, adapted Best Friends™ training materials.

Greater Illinois Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association

✓ License, by an Alzheimer’s Association chapter, to create a 12-part staff training program offered through its Professional Training Institute using training materials adapted from Best Friends™ and co-created with the Best Friends™ developers.

Elmcroft Senior Living

✓ This provider of assisted living and memory care services in various U.S. locations licenses use of the Best Friends™ brand and trade and service marks and has earned permission to label all their Communities as “following the Best Friends™ Model of Care” in association with maintaining Best Friends™ Master Trainer certification among designated staff.

Americare Systems

✓ This provider of assisting living and memory care services within its Assisted Living Facilities division is licensed to access the Best Friends brand and trade and service marks, participate in the Best Friends™ Master Trainer Certification program, and incorporate Best Friends practices throughout its Communities’ dementia care services, thereby entitling use of the designation “following the Best Friends™ Model of Care.” A customized evaluation tool, “The Americare Artifacts of Best Friends Approach,” helps support and assess the quality of all aspects of its dementia care program, making this care philosophy a great tool for achieving culture change and thereby a tangible point of difference for market success.

Atria Senior Living Group

✓ Customized adaptation of the Best Friends™ activities books was produced in collaboration with the Best Friends™ authors, HPP, and Atria Senior Living, a nationwide provider of independent and assisted living communities, for exclusive use in Atria’s Life Guidance neighborhoods in support of residents with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. Under agreement with HPP, the content was subsequently transmitted into Atria’s intra-company network for shared access by all Life Guidance staff.
H. Lundbeck A/S (Pharmaceuticals), Australia

✓ The Australian division of this global pharmaceutical company secured permission and purchased customized reprints of the Best Friends™ activity books (both volumes) to use as educational “premiums” for client distribution.

American Baptist Homes of the West (ABHOW)

✓ This nonprofit public benefit corporation has licensed use of Best Friends™ for internal staff training and programming in ABHOW’s memory support “Grove” communities. ABHOW has built Best Friends terminology into some of its job descriptions and even the job titles.
Training

Health Professions Press manages a professional development program called Specialized Expert Training (S.E.T.) that provides high-quality training in a model that brings the professional development experience to the door of clients at the time they need it and for the purposes they articulate. The flexibility of the model enables HPP to design training events in collaboration with authors that can be tailored to individual customer needs. Experienced speakers teach participants effective practices for healthcare and long-term care settings, guide them through activity programs, and help them utilize proven management strategies. HPP authors develop their trainings directly around the content of their books, the research behind their work, and their experiences in the field.

The Best Friends™ approach has been one of the most sought-after topics in the S.E.T. program. An intensive 2-day training prepares and certifies successful attendees as Best Friends™ Master Trainers, and other introductory and specialized topic trainings are also available. These options are described below.

Best Friends™ Master Trainer Certification

S.E.T. offers two paths to certification as a Best Friends™ Master Trainer. Both involve participation in an intensive 2-day training program, which upon successful completion results in the awarding of Master Trainer certification in the Best Friends™ approach. These two paths—attendance at an annual Institute and participation in a customized, on-site training—are described below. Rigorous training requirements must be met before Master Trainer status is conferred, and ongoing monitoring and renewal ensures maintenance of high-level implementation and fidelity to the model of care. (For more information, Guidelines on Master Trainer Certification are available at www.healthpropress.com/bfai, or they may be requested by writing to bestfriends@healthpropress.com or Best Friends™ Master Trainer Certification, Health Professions Press, P.O. Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-0624.)

1. Institutes for Master Trainer Certification

Best Friends™ Institutes are typically scheduled annually and held in a major metropolitan area in the U.S. Attendees enjoy an intensive professional development experience with interactive training, the opportunity for one-on-one exchange with the Best Friends™ expert leaders, and networking with others engaged in similar work from a broad range of settings and backgrounds. The mix makes for a responsive learning environment conducive to a concentrated focus on Best Friends™ strategies. Master Trainer certification is conferred on qualified individuals who demonstrate mastery of “train-the-trainer” training taught by a Best Friends Expert Leader. Training focuses not only on Best Friends™ principles and practices, but also knowledge of adult learning principles and demonstrated instructional ability.
Caregiving communities that invest in the professional development of staff for Master Trainer certification gain the ability to associate with the Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM} name and its respected brand; each location at which a Master Trainer is based may use the designation “Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM} Environment.”

Eligible Master Trainers (e.g., those who are self-employed) may qualify to conduct income-generating introductory trainings in the Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM} model. This option is designed for independent dementia trainers and consultants who wish to distinguish themselves as a source of expert training in personalized, holistic dementia care and to be confident of providing training and consultation in the highest quality of care for people being served with dementia. For more information, write to bestfriends@healthpropress.com.

2. On-Site Trainings for Master Trainer Certification

For parties of 10 or more, an organization may request a customized training for Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM} Master Trainer certification for their own group. Interested organizations should contact bestfriends@healthpropress.com to discuss arrangements.

Other Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM} Trainings

S.E.T. offers additional training programs to organizations that want to host their own workshops, conferences, or on-site staff development programs. Clients determine the venue for the training event and the professional development priorities for the participants. Common topics include the core elements of the Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM} approach, staff training, and addressing challenging behaviors. Clients contact HPP to arrange the training, and HPP staff in turn share the request with one of the Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM} speakers and coordinate the three-way development of recommendations that will help meet the needs of the client group. Most trainings are 1 or 2 days in length. Arrangements can also be made for keynote speeches and talks for community events. Direct inquiries to training@healthpropress.com). A sampling of Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM} trainings follows.

Introduction to Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM}

This introductory presentation teaches participants how to care for someone with Alzheimer’s disease using the Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM} approach. Caregivers learn to integrate the essential elements of friendship—respect, empathy, trust, and humor—into their care techniques.

Staff Training in the Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM} Approach

The staff training workshop will help care communities enhance the quality of their dementia care programs and develop an effective, satisfied staff. A Best Friends\textsuperscript{TM} expert will present how this training approach will help staff achieve better outcomes and more rewarding experiences.
Activities Programming

This interactive training demonstrates how to introduce meaningful engagements into the day and create activities in the moment. Participants learn communication and conversation tips, how to use songs and musical tie-ins, how to create intergenerational activities, and ideas for unprogrammed times, including evenings.

Acclaim for Best Friends™ Training

Evaluation forms completed by attendees after trainings tell the story of the exceptional quality of instruction offer in Best Friends™ trainings:

“Interactive, open environment... This is a great training experience.”
—Margaret Moody, Program Associate, Alzheimer’s Association, Western Carolina Chapter

“Virginia and Tonya left me wanting more! Their vast knowledge was inspiring...Tonya is now on my (short) list of teachers who have influenced me.”
—Melody Malec, Immanuel Communities

“A game changer for those caring for persons with dementia.”
—Scott Tarte, Regional Director of Operations, Elmcroft Senior Living

“This is one of the best learning experiences I have been able to attend.”
—Jennifer Willis, Regional Nurse Consultant, Americare

“A great training—the best I’ve been to. The trainers are well educated and send you home with excitement to roll out this approach as soon as you get back to work.”
—Tracy Plonsky, LSW, Friendship Village of Bloomington

“Best training of 20 years in nursing!”
—Jerry Poluka, Heartland Village Leader, Elmcroft Senior Living

“Takes focus off clinical approach and allows staff to engage socially and spiritually on a deeper and more meaningful level.”
—Jennifer Benner, Director of Operations, Las Villas Del Norte SeniorCare

“It is without a doubt the most advanced and most humane program a community may adopt for the people they serve.”
—Abby Pettit, Life Enrichment Coordinator, Heritage Community of Kalamazoo

“The knowledge and practical advice of each instructor is just what the dementia care community needs to make a big difference in small ways.”
—Kelly T. Fogg, Regional Engage Life Program Director, Atria Senior Living
“I would recommend Best Friends Master Trainer instruction to all professionals that are committed to excellence in dementia training and education.”

—Michelle Horazdorsky, Director of Life Enrichment and Community Integration, Evangelical Homes of Michigan

“It’s an awesome program that can be used for everyone, not just dementia. The interaction among the group was very helpful and provided different methods of applying the Best Friends approach.”

—Franna Marszalek, Director of Life Enrichment, Pathway Senior Living

“It was very well organized and thought out. I liked being provided with words, ways, and examples to explain this ‘common sense’ approach. Prepares you to teach and lead.”

—Joseph Amend-Marshall, Director of Admissions and Social Services, Friendship Village of Bloomington/Lifespace Communities, Inc.

“Well organized and ‘user friendly’ for individuals to grasp material and to instruct others on concepts. The philosophy is able to address all cultures with the approach we all long for—to be treated with dignity and honor.”

—Barbara Kouba, Landsun Homes

“The level of leadership and talent that was available to meet and discuss ideas with was very enjoyable.”

—Kristy Redman, Executive Director/Owner, Prestige Estates Assisted Living & Memory Care

“I enjoyed that we were taught ideas and tactics to teach staff. It was lighthearted and fun—a great learning experience!”

—Anne Peterson, Activity Director, Good Shepherd Services

“Great overall educational opportunity and access to experts. I liked just getting new ideas and being energized.”

—Lisa Hutchins, Divisional Director Life Guidance Operations, Atria Senior Living

“The interaction, the humor, sharing, and overall ‘comfort’ of the conference was tremendous! I learned so much!”

—Nicole Francis, Divisional Director of Life Guidance Operations, Atria Senior Living
Products

**The Best Friends Approach to Dementia Care, Second Edition**
By Virginia Bell, M.S.W., and David Troxel, M.P.H.

This is the seminal volume on the Best Friends™ approach to Alzheimer’s care. This groundbreaking, comprehensive program builds on the essential elements of friendship: respect, empathy, support, trust, humor. Offering the building blocks of a care model that is both effective and flexible, the Best Friends™ approach encourages adaptation to each person’s remaining strengths and abilities. In this completely revised and expanded second edition, care partners learn how to apply the core principles of the approach through practical tips and instructive examples of Best Friends™ in action. An all-new section also provides a roadmap for creating and sustaining a Best Friends™ program.


**Spanish edition:** *The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer’s Care* has been translated by the respected Spanish/Mexican publisher Editorial Herder. The founder of the Mexican Alzheimer’s Society, Lilia Mendoza, has not only endorsed this book but also written the introduction for the Spanish edition. *Los Mejores Amigos en el Cuidado de Alzheimer* is sold in the U.S. and Canada by Health Professions Press.


**The Best Friends Staff**

**Building a Culture of Care in Alzheimer’s Programs**
By Virginia Bell, M.S.W., and David Troxel, M.P.H.

The Best Friends™ approach to Alzheimer’s care improves the quality of life not only for persons with Alzheimer’s disease but also for the staff providing care. Virginia Bell and David Troxel, recognized internationally for their innovative work, have applied their years of experience to a training approach geared to help staff achieve better outcomes and more rewarding experiences—and help programs retain an effective, satisfied staff.

The book’s examples from real staff around the world show how care communities are implementing the Best Friends™ approach with residents and families. *The Best Friends Staff* will provide the inspiration and working tools to transform a care culture by providing:

- hundreds of case studies illustrating successful programs
- creative ideas to use to implement change
- a “toolkit” in each chapter with learning exercises, activities, games, and resources
- proven advice on staff training and retention

Readers familiar with this book will be able to not only help staff make every day consistently reassuring, enjoyable, and secure for people with Alzheimer’s disease, but also make their work environment more rewarding for themselves.

$44.99  Stock #12636 (ISBN 978-1-878812-63-6)  296 pages  7” x 10”  papercover  © 2001
The Best Friends Book of Alzheimer’s Activities, Volume One
with 147 versatile, easy-to-implement Best Friends™ activities
By Virginia Bell, M.S.W., David Troxel, M.P.H., Robin Hamon, M.S.W., and Tonya Cox, M.S.W.

Using the Best Friends™ approach to activities, any member of a program’s care staff can turn the simplest interaction with a person with dementia into an engagement that satisfies essential physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. The versatile, easy-to-implement Best Friends™ activities in The Best Friends Book of Alzheimer’s Activities, Volume One, teach “the art of being together” and help transform the activity programming at a nursing facility, adult day center, assisted living facility, or home care setting. Staff, participants, and family members will all benefit.

Included are:

- formal and informal activities, with innumerable variations
- communication and conversation tips
- suggested songs and musical tie-ins
- adaptations for people in the early and late stages of Alzheimer’s disease
- activities for unprogrammed time, including evenings
- ideas especially for men
- opportunities for intergenerational exchanges
- preventive measures to avoid unwanted surprises
- reminders of the spiritual benefits inherent in good activities

Planning activities for people with dementia may seem challenging, but this first volume of The Best Friends Book of Alzheimer’s Activities shows how easy and natural it can be.


The Best Friends Book of Alzheimer’s Activities, Volume Two
with 149 more ideas for creative engagements
By Virginia Bell, M.S.W., David Troxel, M.P.H., Robin Hamon, M.S.W., and Tonya Cox, M.S.W.

Volume Two includes 149 all-new activities for individuals with dementia. Like the first book, this collection of versatile engagements adds both meaning and enjoyment to the activities at adult day centers, home care settings, or residential care facilities. Feedback and insights from individuals with early-stage dementia helped shape this new collection, as well as activity suggestions from national and international dementia programs that provide an enhanced focus on diversity and multiculturalism. Also featured are topics of interest to participants in their 50s and 60s, such as the Internet, advocacy, and community service. Participants, staff, and family members will find fresh ideas for creative art projects, interactive games, and evening activities.

New themes to explore in Volume Two include:

- activities related to the kitchen and food
- life story sharing and reminiscence
- religious and spiritual traditions
- wellness

Adaptations for people in the early and late stages of Alzheimer’s disease, preventive measures to avoid unwanted surprises, and conversation tips make these activities particularly versatile.

The Best Friends Daily Planner
By Virginia Bell, M.S.W., and David Troxel, M.P.H.

This handy and practical daily planner provides you with Best Friends™ guiding principles, activities, and reflection questions to support your caregiving each week. With ample space to record your thoughts and the reactions of the persons with dementia in your care, this invaluable tool will guide you through the year and provide a record of your caregiving experiences in the years to come. Each month features one of the 12 rights from the Best Friends™ Dementia Bill of Rights.


A Dignified Life, Revised & Expanded
The Best Friends™ Approach to Alzheimer’s Care – A Guide for Care Partners
By Virginia Bell, M.S.W., and David Troxel, M.P.H.

Recognizing the unique needs of family caregivers, the authors of The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer’s Care have re-written their classic book just for these readers. Illustrated through real, heartfelt stories, A Dignified Life shows how the Best Friends™ method can bring dignity to the lives of both those who have Alzheimer’s disease and those who care for them using creative and effective communication and meaningful activities. This optimistic book is an indispensable resource for all family members and friends caring for someone with Alzheimer’s disease. A Dignified Life is a collaborative trade adaptation between Health Professions Press and Health Communications, Inc., the publisher of the original line of Chicken Soup for the Soul books.


A Dignified Life is a publication of Health Communications, Inc.
(Toll-free: 800-441-5569 / Online: www.hcibooks.com)

Related Products

The following items are appealing supplements for incorporating Best Friends™ into your programming for staff. Contact bestfriends@healthpropress.com for more information.

Best Friends™ Tote Bag
Featuring a bright Best Friends™ logo on a black background, this durable and attractive tote bag advertises your commitment to providing the best possible dementia care wherever you go. Use it yourself or provide it in recognition to your best performing staff. A roomy, zippered main compartment can hold and protect a laptop and supplies. The bag also features an interior zippered pocket and an outer compartment with easily accessible pen and phone pockets. The 22” long, 2” wide carrying handles provide comfort and ease of use.
**Best Friends™ T-Shirts**

A simple but effective way for staff to show that they believe it takes Best Friends™ to provide the best care for people with Alzheimer’s disease is to wear the Best Friends™ logo. These high-quality cotton T-shirts feature the logo design in striking kelly green and royal blue.
Translations

In addition to selling in the English language throughout the world via distributors located in the U.K., Canada, Australia, South and Central America, Asia, India, and the Middle East, the Best Friends™ books have garnered the attention of publishers from around the world responding to the international interest in and adoption of the Best Friends™ approach. Translation rights have been licensed for numerous foreign language editions of these titles from the Best Friends™ product line.

To date, translations include:

**The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer’s Care**
- Arabic (first-ever Alzheimer’s book in Arabic, published by Alzheimer’s Association Lebanon)
- German (Ernst Reinhardt Verlag)
- Italian (Armando Editore)
- Spanish (Editorial Herder Mexico)

**The Best Friends Staff**
- German (Ernst Reinhardt Verlag)

**The Best Friends Book of Alzheimer’s Activities, Volume 1**
- German (Ernst Reinhardt Verlag)

**A Dignified Life**
- Korean (HCI and Montreal-Contacts/The Rights Agency)
- Chinese (HCI and PsyGarden Publishing, Taiwan)

**The Original Alzheimer’s Disease Bill of Rights**

Translated into Arabic, Cantonese, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, and many more languages. These translations have appeared in numerous newsletters, journals, web site pages, and conference materials worldwide.
The Publisher

Health Professions Press, Inc. (HPP) is a specialist publisher focused on the broad range of issues in gerontology, long-term care, and healthcare administration. Recognizing that society’s needs in caring for an aging population were growing rapidly, HPP set out when it incorporated in 1989 to address these concerns with textbooks and practical, state-of-the-art resources that would help both professional and family caregivers meet their obligations. Today HPP products address a broad range of healthcare needs. The company is respected worldwide for its reliable, high-quality publications in the human services and has won numerous awards for its products.

The HPP Vision

Health Professions Press will be the leading independent publisher of healthcare and aging-related resources, providing the knowledge, tools, and inspiration necessary to improve the lives of people around the world. Working with innovative authors who are transforming their fields, HPP will advance progressive practice and research to change the culture of healthcare and revolutionize how we grow older.

The HPP Mission

Health Professions Press publishes high-quality, evidence-based resources of lasting value for healthcare professionals, researchers, students, and families. Recognized particularly for its titles in Alzheimer’s care, HPP has been dedicated since 1989 to advancing physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual health. Our award-winning books and other media span the fields of aging, long-term and acute care, rehabilitation, allied health, social work, psychology, and nursing. Partnering with our authors, HPP develops products and services that promote compassionate and holistic care, improve organizational leadership, foster more rewarding and satisfying care experiences, broaden professional knowledge, and preserve the individual dignity of those served.

Contact Information
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