

The Story of My Life

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Introduction

The diagnosis of dementia can be alarming to many of our residents and their loved ones. The memories they once loved to share are sometimes lost in the deterioration of their brain. The majority of dementia cases (60% to 80%) are classified as Alzheimer's disease. In Alzheimer's disease, the person progresses through several stages that roughly coincide with reverse developmental levels, with those in the final stages being completely dependent on others.

Southland Health and Rehab is a 122 bed facility with approximately 57% of the patients suffering from an underlying diagnosis of Alzheimer's. The partnership with nursing and therapy is vital as we work together to safely care for each resident. Recently we introduced a clinical program known as Life Story Boards.

What is a Life Story Board?

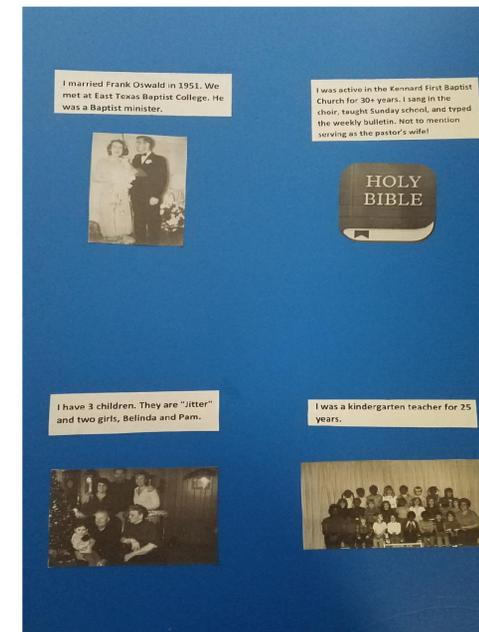
The simplest answer is that it is a poster board filled with pictures of memories about a resident. The board is used to illustrate the life of the resident through the inclusion of childhood photos, favorite foods, personal hobbies, and any other significant moment that may possibly stimulate a reaction from the resident.

How is the Life Story Board created?

The resident will receive an initial evaluation by the speech language pathologist and an occupational therapist. During the evaluation, a cognitive assessment will be used to determine the baseline of the resident. The therapy team will reach out to the residents family and have them answer a series of questions about the patient's history. Once the information is gathered the therapy team will work with the patient to design the Life Story Board.

How has the use of the Life Story Board impacted our facility?

We have seen such positive changes in several of our residents. The Life Story Boards have created an increased level of awareness between the CNAs and the resident and is often used to calm the resident if their temperament is elevated negatively. The therapy department has focused their goals on enhancing function, promoting relationships, social participation, and finding ways for those with dementia to enjoy life through therapeutic interventions.



Ms. O's Life Story Board

Ms. O was evaluated by Speech Therapy, which determined she was a level 4. During Ms. O's treatment sessions, the SLP collaborated with Ms. O and Ms. O's daughter. The SLP identified the areas of Ms. O's life that were meaningful: being a wife, a mother, active church member, and a school teacher.

Once the Life Story board was complete, the SLP trained the floor staff on the use and purpose of the Life Story board. Ms. O often demonstrates increased anxiety; however, she is easily redirected with the use of the Life Story board.

Ms. M's Life Story Board

Ms. M was evaluated by Occupational Therapy, which determined she was a level 3.6 on the Allen Cognitive Scale. Ms. M's family provided several meaningful pictures to utilize on the Life Story board.

Since Ms. M is very impulsive and a high fall risk, the staff is able to use the Life Story board to redirect her with activities of interest, i.e. sewing activity (rolling ribbon). Ms. M will also engage with staff for a lengthy amount of time talking about past life experiences, which in turn decreases fall risk and impulsivity.

