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Staff at the assisted living center all knew Mrs. C. She was the resident “behavior problem.” She continuously walked and paced in circles around her room. Her loud cries could be heard throughout the building. When the staff attempted to distract or redirect her behavior, she became increasingly loud and distraught. Nothing worked to calm Mrs. C. Finally, during a visit from a consulting speech-language pathologist, the SLP noticed that cold air from a large air vent was blowing directly on Mrs. C’s chair. Once the temperature and air flow were adjusted, Mrs. C’s problem behavior disappeared.

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Do you know Mrs. C? Is she a resident at the facility where you work? Are you the staff member who works with her family? As communication specialists, SLPs are in a unique position to help patients with Alzheimer’s disease (AD) and their families as they cope with the different stages of the disease.

I wrote *The Source for Alzheimer’s & Dementia* to help the SLP who works with patients with AD whether they live in assisted living centers, skilled nursing facilities, or in the homes of their caregivers.

Section One gives background information on the history of AD, the brain and its role in memory and cognition, and a review of communication and behavior. This material may be copied and shared with caregivers.

Section Two contains techniques to help people with mild to severe AD maintain optimal levels of function as well as suggested environmental modifications to help the person with AD stay safe and oriented. An agenda and activities for a six-week caregiver training program is also in Section Two.

There are also four appendixes filled with useful information. Appendix One contains therapy materials (sample Schedules, Therapy Conversation Topics, sample Social Reminders, and visuals for Self-Care Activities.) Appendix Two defines other forms of dementia. Recommended books about AD, support groups, and web sites are listed in Appendix Three and Appendix Four.

I have two goals for you as you use this book. First that you find the treatment suggestions in Section Two useful in your practice. I also hope that you will be able to share information from this book with family caregivers. Communication breakdowns remain the most stressful component of living with AD— affecting every corner of life. I believe that if caregivers understand the nature of communication and what happens when it breaks down, they will be better able to care for and enjoy the person with AD.

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