

## Rehabilitation for Individuals with Dementia: Facilitating Success!

Historically, individuals with dementia were excluded from exercise and rehabilitation efforts with the assumption that they would not be able to participate. We know so much more now about working with these individuals! Given the aging baby boomers (the “Silver Tsunami”) and the incidence and prevalence of dementia in those over age 65, physical therapists in almost all practice settings must be prepared to face the challenges of working with individuals with dementia. If we simply approach these patients as we do their cognitively intact peers, we are not likely to be successful. We must integrate and exploit what we know about the pathophysiology and motor, sensory, and behavioral implications of dementia. With an understanding of the physiological neuroprotective impact of exercise, the intricacies of motor learning in those with dementia, and developing therapeutic relationships within this special population, therapists will be better equipped to achieve optimal outcomes. This course is designed to bring salient, practical and evidence-based information to the practicing clinician to enhance the efficacy of physical therapy interventions for individuals with dementia. The vast majority of individuals with dementia can benefit from activity-based exercise programs and rehabilitation if we design and carry out the interventions appropriately. This course provides the necessary content, strategies and clinical reasoning practice to allow rehab clinicians to do just that.

Upon completion of this course, the participant will be able to:

1. Differentiate types of dementia (compare and contrast pathology, signs & symptoms, clinical trajectory) and reversible disorders that can present as dementia (differential diagnoses) and discuss implications for rehabilitation.
2. Facilitate optimal interactions with individuals with dementia via modification of the environment, communication strategies, and the therapeutic relationship.
3. Describe important movement disorders and motor learning principles specific to individuals with dementia and integrate successful treatment strategies that exploit this knowledge.
4. Review the existing literature on exercise and activity based interventions and outcome measures in individuals with dementia and evaluate the relevance of this literature in the context of your own clinical practice.



## **Julie D. Ries, PT, PhD**

Dr. Ries is a Professor of Physical Therapy at Marymount University in Arlington VA where she teaches courses in neurological rehabilitation, amputations & prosthetics, kinesiology, and basic PT skills. She has extensive clinical experience in a variety of settings, with a passion for geriatrics. She received her BS in PT from Quinnipiac College, her MA in Education & Human Development from George Washington University, and her PhD in Physical Therapy from Nova Southeastern University. Her dissertation research was a methodological study on outcome measures for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and her recent research has focused on the impact of balance training in individuals with dementia. She has presented at multiple APTA NEXT and CSM conferences, and has presented 12-20 hour CEU courses on rehabilitation in individuals with dementia across the country.