



Virtual Dementia Tour

Administrator:

Ms. Lycrecia Patterson

Arbor Springs Health & Rehab Center

1910 Pepperell Parkway
Opelika, Alabama 36801
(334) 749-1471

The “Virtual Dementia Tour” (VDT) is set up like the inside of a home with a bed, kitchen table, closet, bathroom area, and laundry space. Before the participants begin the tour, we put gloves on both of their hands and wrap them with tape to demonstrate the pains of Arthritis. Corn is placed in the shoes to demonstrate neuropathy. Goggles are covered in matte-finished tape and a headphone and radio set playing static is placed on their ears to reduce their ability to see, hear, and focus. Each participant is assigned a simple task to complete once entering the VDT.

Our Best Practice focuses not only on the constant struggles dementia residents face, but also the battles of aging in general. Many elderly who have not been diagnosed with dementia can often experience issues with their vision, hearing, feeling, and develop pain in their hands and feet. The only way to truly understand the struggles is to walk in their shoes. In an effort to demonstrate these every day challenges for dementia residents, we created a simulation for our employees, families, and the community. It is essential that caregivers and family members truly understand the undesirable battles nursing home residents often face. This simulation forces participants to find alternative methods to complete the task at hand with no regard to their impaired senses.

The Virtual Dementia Tour is designed to accommodate eight participants at a time. Each participant is read a specific task after the hearing is distracted with static. The tasks include setting the table, making the bed, putting on pajamas, hanging clothes, folding laundry, rinsing mouth with mouthwash, cleaning dentures, and sweeping the floor. All of these tasks seem simple, but the participants struggle to complete them.

Since we have restructured our VDT so that we can travel, we have every intention of setting up the tour for other organizations. We are also excited to set up the simulation on family day and will encourage all family members to participate. We have seen where other facilities have provided the Virtual Dementia Tour in other states, but we are not aware of any other tours that are able to travel.

Dementia is becoming more prevalent and significant in our society, and there is a growing need for caretakers to assist with this population. Our Virtual Dementia Tour is admirable because we have the capabilities to take our simulation to health fairs and community events. This provides the opportunity to educate the community and raise awareness for the desperately needed empathetic approach for dementia care.