



## Lesson Plan for: Grandpa and Lucy: A Story about Love and Dementia

Adapted from Dementia Friends Minnesota and with permission of  
Dementia Friends, Alzheimer's Society, London UK.

**Grades:** 2 – 6

**Time:** 40 minutes for Champions doing youth Dementia Friends session

If you are a Dementia Friend Champion, the Grandpa and Lucy Lesson Plan can be used to make Dementia Friends. Add the following to the Lesson Plan. The following lesson plan can be used by classroom teachers or adults working with youth in the community e.g. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H, faith group, etc.




### **Purpose:**

- Students will learn what dementia is and who it affects.
- Students will understand the impact of dementia on skills, memories, abilities, emotions and relationships.
- Students will learn how to successfully navigate their personal relationship with a loved one affected by dementia.




### **Materials:**

- *Grandpa and Lucy: A Story about Love and Dementia*, by Edie Weinstein. Purchase on Amazon.com.
- Chart paper, markers, deck of cards, small ball, hat, animal cards

## Introduction/Background: Your Brain and It's Many Jobs




	8 minutes
	Chart paper, markers
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ask students to brainstorm the different parts of the body that help us be healthy. Record them on chart paper (lungs, stomach, heart, brain, etc.)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Circle the word BRAIN on the chart. Ask students if they know what the brain's job is.</li><li>• <i>"Your brain is THE BOSS of your body. It keeps your body operating - breathing, heartbeat, eyes blinking, digesting food we eat and other jobs that keep our bodies going without you even thinking about it.</i></li><li>• <i>Your brain also has other important jobs including: Holding memories, making sense of the world around us, understanding where we are, what we are doing, making decisions, solving problems and talking to each other."</i></li></ul></li><li>2. Think of a time when you were sick or hurt. What was wrong?</li><li>3. Record responses on the chart paper.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Examples: "Cold: my runny nose, sore throat, cough. My body's respiratory system (nose, throat, lungs) was sick! One time I fell out of a tree! I broke a bone and that bone needs to heal."</li><li>• <i>"Your brain can have an illness or injury just like any other part of your body. When this happens to your brain, it cannot do some of its jobs as well as it used to. When a person has trouble remembering, thinking, speaking, or understanding things that they used to, doctors call it dementia. When people have dementia they may have trouble taking care of themselves or keeping themselves safe. The most common type of dementia is called Alzheimer's disease. Write the word ALZHEIMER'S on the chart and circle it.</i></li><li>• <i>Who gets dementia? Dementia is most often seen in older people, but not all older people have dementia.</i></li></ul></li></ol>

## Teach: Grandpa and Lucy: A Story about Love and Dementia

	15 minutes
	<i>Grandpa and Lucy: A Story about Love and Dementia</i> , by Edie Weinstein Purchase on Amazon.com
	<p>Read text aloud to students, stopping to discuss the following prompts.</p> <p>Pages 3 and 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How is Lucy feeling about visiting her grandfather? How is Grandpa feeling about Lucy visiting? (excited, happy, they both like spending time together)</li></ul> <p>Page 6 and 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What happens when Lucy, her Grandpa, and her mom arrive at the movie theatre? How is Lucy feeling now? (confused, her feelings are hurt, upset). How is Grandpa feeling? (confused, embarrassed, upset, angry)</li><li>• Why does Grandpa call Lucy by the wrong name? (confused, not sure who she is)</li><li>• Do you think it would be a good idea for Lucy to tell him he said the wrong name? (no, because he might be embarrassed)</li></ul> <p>Page 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does Lucy's mom suggest they can support Grandpa? (Talk about older memories, look at pictures from the past, listening to music from the past, going for walks. Avoid telling Grandpa he is wrong or trying to correct him. Changing the subject to something like old war stories can help calm Grandpa down.)</li></ul> <p>End of text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How is Lucy feeling at the end of the story? (connected to Grandpa, proud of herself for helping. How is Grandpa feeling and acting? (calm, content, happy, and more like himself)</li><li>• In some ways, Lucy must act more grown up now that she understands more about Grandpa's illness. Discuss how.</li></ul> <p>Central Idea/Message: <i>Understanding and relating to a loved one with dementia can be challenging. Families and friends can support their loved ones affected by dementia and still maintain a positive, loving relationship.</i></p>



## Everyday Tasks Activity

### (Alternate Activity: Role Play or Discussion Scenarios pg.5)

	10 minutes
	Ball, hat, deck of cards, animal cards
	<p>The purpose of this activity is to simulate how when the brain is overwhelmed we cannot complete regular tasks or think clearly.</p> <p>Ask for a volunteer to stand in front of the group. Take the various items and one at a time, hand the volunteer an item and ask them to complete a task with it. The volunteer must accept each new task while trying to remember the previous tasks and directions so they complete them all. The volunteer will likely become overwhelmed and confused.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hand the volunteer the ball. Tell them no matter what they must not drop or put down the ball.</li><li>• Hand them a hat. Tell them to put it on.</li><li>• Say, <i>“Don’t drop the ball.”</i></li><li>• Hand them a deck of cards. Tell them to find all the hearts.</li><li>• IMMEDIATELY hand them a set of animal pictures and tell them to name the animals.</li><li>• Say, <i>“Don’t drop the ball.”</i></li><li>• IMMEDIATELY tell them to take off the hat and hand it to a neighbor on their right.</li><li>• Say, <i>“Don’t drop the ball.”</i></li></ul> <p>Discussion: Ask the volunteer how they felt during the activity. (Frustrated, confused, difficult to focus, they may have started to feel angry or anxious)</p> <p>Activity: Repeat the activity, however, this time stand in front of the volunteer and lower yourself to his/her eye level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hand the volunteer the ball. Wait 20 seconds and move on to the next task.</li><li>• Hand them a hat. Tell them to put it on. Ask them to hand you the ball back. Wait 20 seconds and move on to the next task.</li><li>• Hand them half of the deck of cards. Tell them that together you will each find the hearts. Wait 20 seconds and move on to the next task.</li><li>• Hand them a set of animal pictures and tell them to name the animals. Wait 20 seconds and move on to the next task.</li><li>• Ask them to hand their hat to a neighbor on their right.</li></ul>



	<p>Discuss how the activity this time felt different.</p> <p>Restate Central Idea/Message: <i>Relate this activity to a person living with dementia. The feeling of not being able to complete simple, everyday tasks is frustrating and confusing when there are too many tasks or instructions are given quickly. However if we are patient, talk slower and offer support it is possible to complete tasks.</i></p>
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**Alternative Activity: Role Play or Discussion Scenarios**

	<p>5-7 minutes</p>
	<p>Role Play or Discussion Scenarios: Select two students and take them aside to explain the scene. Then narrate each scenario to the class, having the student volunteers act out the scenario. The scenario could also be used to facilitate a discussion.</p> <p><b>Person 1 is Julia living with Alzheimer’s disease</b> (remind the group that Alzheimer’s is the most common form of dementia): <i>Gardening is your favorite hobby. You are out watering the flowers you tend to every day. You have lived in the same house for 25 years in a neighborhood full of people you care about. You see someone come out of the house next door and walk towards you waving. You know you should know who they are but you suddenly feel uncomfortable and confused.</i></p> <p><b>Person 2 is Sharon who is a neighbor:</b> <i>You are walking out to get your mail on a sunny day, when you see your neighbor Julia watering her beautiful flowers. You know that Julia has recently returned from a trip to visit her grandchildren. You also know that Julia lives with Alzheimer’s disease. Julia loves gardening and takes pride in her yard and flowers. You walk over to say hello.</i></p> <p>STOP: Ask the group what would probably occur in this normal, friendly chat between neighbors. <i>(Neighbors say hello, ask about her trip, exchange small talk about the neighborhood or the weather.)</i></p> <p>Ask the class what effect Alzheimer’s could have on the conversation. <i>(Julia might not remember who Sharon is. Julia might not say anything. She might be confused and get frustrated when she can’t remember.)</i></p> <p>How could Sharon help Julia if she is confused or frustrated? What should she say to Julia? <i>(“Hi Julia! It’s me your neighbor Sharon.” “How are your grandchildren Nate and Sarah?” “Your flowers look beautiful. Tell me about them. Which are your favorite?”)</i></p>

	<p>How would talking about Julia’s flowers help? (<i>Talking about a hobby that has been enjoyed for many years could be more comfortable for Julia.</i>)</p> <p>If Julia is frustrated and agitated what should Sharon do? <i>Sharon should go along with Julia’s answers to her questions. Sharon should not correct her if she calls her the wrong name or gets confused about details during their conversation. Refer back to the suggestions Mom made to Lucy in the book.</i></p>
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### Review the Five Key Messages About Dementia

	2 minutes
	<p><b>Say: We learned the five key messages in Grandpa and Lucy. Who can remember them?</b></p> <p>Ask for volunteers to share the five key messages. The messages are listed below for your reference.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dementia is not a normal part of aging.</li> <li>2. Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.</li> <li>3. Dementia is not just about having memory problems.</li> <li>4. It is possible to have a good quality of life with dementia.</li> <li>5. There is more to a person than the dementia.</li> </ol> <p>Restate Central Idea/Message: <i>Understanding and relating to a loved one with dementia can be challenging. Families and friends can support their loved ones affected by dementia and still maintain a positive, loving relationship.</i></p>



## Turn Your Understanding into Action

	5 minutes
	Children's Action Slips (download from the Champion section of the Dementia Friends MN website)
	<p><b>Say: Think about what you can do to help people living with dementia. You could:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Talk with your family about what you learned today</b></li> <li>• <b>Be patient with people – be kind.</b></li> <li>• <b>Visit family members with dementia and don't be upset if the person doesn't remember your name. You can be sure that they will have good feelings during your visit.</b></li> </ul> <p>Give out action slips and encourage children to draw or write their action.</p> <p>After a couple of minutes, ask <b>“has anyone not come up with an action?”</b> If someone has not, brainstorm an action.</p> <p>Ask to hear from 2-3 children (more if time allows) on what their action is.</p> <p>Explain to the children that they are now Dementia Friends (whether they have shared with the group or not).</p> <p>Thank children for coming today and for becoming a Dementia Friend!</p>
	<p><b>Champion tip:</b> <i>Complete the on-line reporting session reporting form.</i></p>