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Cuddle therapy connects Alzheimer's patients with peace



Cuddle therapy is helping some Alzheimer's patients in Cedar Park find peace. (Photo: CBS Austin)

By Lindsay Liepman

Nearly 6 million people are living with Alzheimer's Disease according to the Alzheimer's Association.

It's the most common type of Dementia and by 2050, the number is expected to reach 14 million people.

A Cedar Park memory care home found a unique way to connect their patients with peace and comfort, and family members say it's making a difference.

Doris Weston's wall frames a lifetime of now-faded memories due to Alzheimer's.



"The most difficult days was early on when we had to put her in a facility, she would cry when we left," said son Robert Weston.

Two years ago, they found Poet's Walk Memory Care Home in Cedar Park and here things changed, said Robert.

"It keeps her calm and that's where she gets her peace from," said Robert.

Her hands cradle a doll used in cuddle therapy. At times, Doris smiles and fixes the baby's clothes. The mother of four and grandmother to all used to be a daycare worker.

"You see joy on their face. You see them engage in something positive," said Licensed Social Worker Kelsey Lang, Resident & Family Ambassador at Poet's Walk.

The dolls are weighted and life-like. Doris says her baby's name is Robert.

"Me being the baby boy and having her not really knowing me, that means a lot," said Robert.

Caring for the dolls gives Dementia patients a sense of purpose, increases communication and reduces stress.

"We're all about peace and comfort in the moment," said Lang.

Lang wears her own grandmother's necklace. Her experience with dementia-care, is what inspired Lang to help others.

"I'm very passionate about bridging the gap between seeing aging as something negative or to run away from and seeing the value that our residents deserve," said Lang.

And dignity for Doris.

"She is a very strong woman. She's been what's held this family together for so long. Showed us, that family's everything," said Robert.