



Evidence Summary

An overview of research on TimeSlips creative storytelling for people living with dementia

TimeSlips offers training in improvisational communication and storytelling techniques that invite and affirm all forms of expression and weave them into a form that can be shared with others. These can be poems, stories, movement sequences, sound poems, or a combination of these.

The technique can be used one-on-one or in groups. It was developed for people experiencing cognitive challenges, but is beneficial and enjoyable for those of all ages and abilities.

TimeSlips is both evidence-informed (based on evidence in the field) and evidence-based, with over a dozen research studies on the method itself.

Researchers studying TimeSlips have looked at the impact on both people with dementia and the facilitators, including family caregivers, professional caregivers, student volunteers, and medical students.

Benefits for People Living With Dementia

Improved Communication & Engagement

- Increased ability to communicate
(Zhuo et al., 2025; Phillips et al., 2010; Bahlke et al., 2010)
- Increased spontaneous participation (“assertive responses”)
(Bahlke et al., 2010)
- More engagement and alertness
(Fritsch et al., 2009)

Enhanced Mood & Emotional Well-Being

- Improved overall mood
(Loizeau et al., 2015)

- Increased pleasure, humor, playfulness, and joy
(Phillips et al., 2010; Swinnen & de Medeiros, 2018)
- More laughter, including among people with severe dementia
(Vigliotti et al., 2017)

Reduced Behavioral Symptoms

- Reductions in BPSD (behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia)
(Zhuo et al., 2025; Loizeau et al., 2015)

Mental Health Benefits

- Reduced depression in mild–moderate dementia
(Chen et al., 2016)
- Increased positive emotions and decreased negative emotions
(Chen et al., 2016)

Improved Quality of Life & Social Connection

- Better quality of life
(Zhuo et al., 2025)
 - Improved relationships among residents
(George & Houser, 2014)
 - Increased acceptance of others and more positive interpersonal exchange
(Swinnen & de Medeiros, 2018)
 - Improved interactions with staff
(Fritsch et al., 2009; Vigliotti et al., 2017)
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Benefits for Care Partners, Staff & Facilitators

Reduced Stress & Burden

- Lower caregiver distress and burden
(Zhuo et al., 2025)

- Reduced caregiver stress
(Zhuo et al., 2025)

Improved Attitudes & Understanding

- More positive attitudes toward people living with dementia
(Fritsch et al., 2009; Loizeau et al., 2015)
- Increased understanding of residents and person-centered insight
(George & Houser, 2014)
- Improved staff relationships
(George & Houser, 2014)

Impact on Students & Trainees

- Medical students show more positive attitudes after practicing TimeSlips
(George et al., 2011; 2012; 2014)

Program Innovation

- Increases creativity and flexibility in care programming
(George & Houser, 2014)
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Key High-Quality Studies

- **Randomized Controlled Trial (2025)**
Creative storytelling significantly reduced BPSD, improved communication and quality of life, and lowered caregiver burden.
(Zhuo et al., *Scientific Reports*)
- **Large Multi-Site Study (2009)**
Residents showed more engagement and positive interactions; staff had improved attitudes.
(Fritsch et al., *The Gerontologist*)
- **International & Cross-Setting Evidence**
Benefits observed in nursing homes, assisted living, memory care, and museum programs across the U.S., China, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and more.

Full Citations

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