



## Summary of Our Evidence-base

TimeSlips is an improvisational story-telling method usually done with small groups of people experiencing dementia or other forms of isolation or cognitive challenge. Researchers interested in the outcomes of TimeSlips have investigated various effects on individuals with dementia as well as ways participation in TimeSlips sessions affects staff, volunteers, and the wider community. This research uses quantitative as well as qualitative methods; a few studies used random assignment to compare a TimeSlips group with a control group within long-term care residences or to compare residential care communities randomly assigned to conduct regular storytelling sessions or to continue with their ordinary activities.

Some of the findings of research focused on outcomes for people with dementia are as follows:

- ❖ Four Missouri nursing homes and two assisted living residences were assigned either to offer TimeSlips storytelling or regular activities. [Residents in the TimeSlips groups showed significantly greater pleasure and improved communication skills.](#)[1]
- ❖ Residents with moderate to late stage dementia were studied for the seven weeks they participated in TimeSlips storytelling at a Michigan nursing home to see if changes occurred in their communication. [There was a significant increase over time of what the researchers defined as “assertive responses”—spontaneous participation in the storytelling without specific requests from the facilitator.](#)[2]
- ❖ People with mild or moderate dementia living in institutional settings in China participated in TimeSlips sessions for six weeks. [Scores on a widely used depression scale declined significantly. Scores on a scale of observed emotion showed significant increase in positive emotion expression and significant decrease in negative emotion expression.](#)[3]
- ❖ A qualitative study of two residential care communities in the Netherlands found that over the course of the 10-week project, participants in TimeSlips storytelling sessions and Alzheimer’s Poetry Project sessions demonstrated more playful interpersonal exchanges, were more accepting of different abilities of group members, [expressed more humor, and smiled and laughed more than usual according to activity directors who knew them well.](#)[4]

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Some research studies go beyond measuring outcomes for individuals with dementia and interactions with others. A few also examine whether volunteers leading or assisting in the storytelling sessions experience changes in their attitudes about dementia and the people living with it.

- ❖ A 6-month follow-up of participants' quality of life and their interactions with nursing home staff in Pennsylvania demonstrated positive effects on measures of well-being for those with mild to moderate dementia. Though showing no changes on the well-being measures, [people with severe dementia laughed more often during the storytelling sessions. These responses produced more positive interactions with staff.](#)[5]
- ❖ A large study involving matched pairs of nursing homes in Wisconsin and North Carolina randomly assigned 10 to conduct TimeSlips storytelling and 10 to carry on with ordinary activities. [Participants in the TimeSlips residences had significantly more engagement and alertness and more frequent positive interactions with staff. Staff in those residences experienced increased positive attitudes about dementia.](#)[6]
- ❖ A qualitative study TimeSlips in a memory care community in Pennsylvania noted that residents' creativity and enjoyment increased over the 6-week study. [Staff members reported they understood residents better and thought more creatively about all their programming, and the long-term care community itself benefited from improved relationships between residents, between residents and staff, and among staff themselves.](#)[7]
- ❖ Research in Switzerland of a TimeSlips program offered in an art museum found [significant increases in the mood of participants and care partners. Most care partners and volunteers also showed a positive attitudinal change regarding dementia.](#)[8]
- ❖ Three studies conducted in Pennsylvania using both quantitative and qualitative approaches demonstrated that [medical students' attitudes about people having dementia significantly shifted to be more positive after they received training in the TimeSlips method and enacted it in four sessions with nursing home residents.](#)[9]

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