



Dementia

Family Reunion

Dementia is a progressive neurocognitive disorder currently affecting 1.1 million Canadians (17) and their caregivers. Individuals with dementia suffer from decreasing brain function involving the areas of memory, mood, planning, judgement, language and attention (18). Dementia can be either primary (permanent) or secondary (reversible). Alzheimer's disease is the most common primary dementia affecting older adults globally (19). Different parts of the brain are affected by Alzheimer's resulting in memory loss and experiences of auditory or visual hallucinations (1).

Welcome to the Family Reunion! In this simulation, you will take the role of 75 years old Steve. Steve and his wife will be attending annual family reunion on Blue Mountain, Ontario. During this simulation, you will be asked to match the names to the faces of Steve's family members while listening to an auditory hallucination track. This exercise will help you understand the experience of memory loss and empathize with older adults living with Alzheimer's disease.

Materials

- A computer
- Headphones

Procedure

1. Complete the precursor simulations if you have already done so.
2. Put in/on headphones.
3. Adjust the volume to a minimum of 50 percent to fully experience the hallucination track.
4. Begin playing the video and don't stop it until you're ready to reflect on your experience.
5. When the hallucination track begins playing, you will have one minute to memorize the names of your family members.
6. After one minute, an alarm will sound. The names and pictures on the screen will disappear. Continue to follow instructions on the video and locate the embedded activity.
7. Begin the activity when you hear an alarm sound.
8. You will have 1 minute and 50 seconds to match the names to the faces.
9. Another alarm will sound signalling the end of the activity.
10. Take a couple of minutes to reflect on your experience using the questions below.

Reflection Questions

1. This activity showcased only one of the many struggles an individual with Alzheimer's disease faces. How would significant memory loss impact your daily life?
2. How did the auditory hallucination track impact your ability to complete the task? How would the experience of persistent auditory hallucinations affect your daily life?
3. How did it feel stepping into Steve's shoes and struggling to remember the names of your family members? How do you think this would impact the relationships you have with your family?