

Alternative Approaches to Dementia Care

Erin Mobley

University of Michigan School of Social Work

Norway: Skjerven Farm

Skjerven Farm is a green care farm for those with dementia, meaning it offers care in a more home-like setting and incorporates farm life and activities into its programming.

The dementia care program at Skjerven Farm meets three times a week for eight hours. The goal of this green care model is to help individuals with dementia to stay in their homes for a longer period of time and also provides respite for caregivers.



England: Oasis Down to Earth Community Farm

Like Skjerven Farm, Down to Earth Farm also offers a green care farm model of dementia care. The dementia program is offered on Friday mornings and utilizes the animals and plants on the farm.

Down to Earth Farm also offers programs for learning disabilities three days a week. This program incorporates several of the same methods as the dementia care program.



The Netherlands: Hogewey Dementia Village

Hogewey Dementia Village offers an innovative model for dementia care in a long-term setting. Hogewey is a gated village designed specifically for those with memory loss. The idea at Hogewey is to offer a more home-like environment for residents with dementia in order to maintain a quality of life.



Project Goal

Learn about non-traditional methods of dementia care in Scandinavian and European countries and explore the ways these methods could be introduced in the United States.

Classroom Connections

SW560: This community organizing class helped prepare me for the program development aspects of learning about the non-traditional programs.

SW694: This class focusing on older adults, helped me to become familiar with some of the issues faced by the aging population.

Career Connections

I will use what I learned to challenge the traditional methods of care for dementia and possibly help to develop programs for this population that mirror these non-traditional programs.

Skills Utilized

Organization: It was important for me to have a plan and keep important documents in a safe place.

Communication: I kept close contact with those with whom I worked this summer to make sure travel plans were on track and create a good rapport.

Self-care: It was important for me to take care of myself as traveling can be stressful.

Outcomes

I visited and learned about green care farming and the dementia village model of care. I have written a paper about my experiences and how these methods might be adopted in the United States.

Acknowledgments

Alumni Board of Governors and the Office of Global Activities

I'd also like to acknowledge Ruth Dunkle for overseeing my project

Lessons Learned/Advice

Be Flexible: I learned the importance of being flexible with my planning and being okay with unexpected changes.

Keep a Journal: Keeping a journal helps to remember the details of your trip and will be fun to look back on in the future!

Confirm: I learned it is a good idea to confirm addresses and directions with organizations in advance.