

# Scent Science in Action: Enhancing Resident Well-Being at Kindera™ Living

Scent is one of the most direct pathways to the brain, closely linked to memory, emotion, and behaviour. Growing research suggests that intentional scent experiences can support cognition, emotional regulation, and overall well-being, particularly for older adults.

Scent science has been studied for decades, and in the past twenty years research linking olfaction to cognition, dementia, and Alzheimer's has produced compelling findings. Loss of smell is now recognized as one of the earliest indicators of neurodegenerative disease. Research shows that over 78% of individuals living in long term care have no sense of smell, which can directly affect taste and appetite. In some cases, olfactory function can be partially improved or restored through targeted stimulation, creating an opportunity to address nutrition, engagement and wellness simultaneously.

Scent works because it has a direct pathway to the brain's limbic system, bypassing the filters used by other senses. The direct connection explains why scent can rapidly influence mood, memory, and behaviour.

To implement scent therapy safely and effectively, Sandy Croley, Director of Programs and Rehabilitation at Kindera™ Living, partnered with Smelling Pink®, a Canadian company specializing in scent therapy education, providing a structured, web based education platform that trains all level of team members, supports onboarding, can be customized, and includes detailed safety protocols and scent kits. Working with Smelling Pink® she saw an opportunity where scent science was not just explored but embraced as a cognition based intervention grounded in neuroscience.

For Sandy, the science became personal. After losing her sense of smell, she experienced firsthand how disorienting and isolating olfactory loss can be. At the same time, recognizing that the sense of smell often diminishes in people with neurological disorders such as Parkinson's disease and dementia, we sought ways to reawaken it through essential oils and familiar aromas of real homemade cooking, like freshly baked bread and cakes.

At Kindera™ Living the Smelling Pink® program has been integrated into daily life to enhance person-centred care. Rather than relying on generic fragrances, the program uses carefully selected, meaningful scents to support orientation, evoke positive memories, and create calming, familiar environments for residents. Such as using rosemary to help stimulate appetite, lemon to support sleep, and mandarin to energize during exercise. These scent experiences are guided by team member training and clear protocols, ensuring they are used safely and intentionally.

Early observations at the Kindera™ Living Homes suggest that residents often respond with increased engagement, improved mood, and moments of recognition and connection, with outcomes that are deeply meaningful for both residents and the care teams. By incorporating scents as a complementary approach, Kindera™ Living is enriching daily quality of life.

One home shared, "Since adding scent therapy to our Busy Hands and Concentration Groups, something magical has happened. The residents are more engaged, smiling, and often say, "I don't know what it smells like, but it makes me happy!" Homes have also seen improved cognitive health, enhanced social engagement, improved sleep and a more pleasurable spa experience.

The Smelling Pink ® program demonstrates how innovation, when grounded in empathy and evidence, can help create a more responsive and person centred environment.

For further information please visit:

Smelling Pink® [www.smellingpink.ca](http://www.smellingpink.ca)

Watch the founder Tracy Pepe's Ted talk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvRkBJ4f0c8&feature=youtu.be>