

## Crossing Cross-cultural Boundaries

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Helping others learn PAC language can be challenging. We have a different way of speaking of dementia, a way that is respectful and supportive of those living with brain changes. But what happens when those we are teaching don't have a firm grasp of the language we are teaching it in. How do we bridge the gap between culture and language when trying to change the way people think and talk about dementia?

Recently the PAC team spent time in Ottawa and Montreal with some amazing learners who taught US a few things about cross cultural care. The Ottawa private Coach certification was hosted by the Champlain Local Health Integration Network. In order to prepare their learners attending the certification event, they took parts of the Coaching manual and translated it into a booklet for learners to refer to as they were learning in English. We had several learners there who expressed that English was not their first language. Therefore, when reading and listening in English they had to constantly be translating what they see and hear to make sense in the language that their thoughts turn toward. This can easily result in missing pieces of the puzzle or things getting lost in translation. One learner from the Montreal area, who has a particularly difficult time with English, expressed (in French) that she found that using the learning she acquired from the certification very difficult. Since she learned it all in English, which was her first hurdle, she now has to try to process something that is so new to her, and try to use it in her own language, when she does not yet have the PAC language internalized in either language.

As a bilingual French and English Canadian, I can empathize with the difficulty. English is my first language however, I have been speaking French since I was four years old. My French is limited to the conversations that I have with those around me. Therefore, when mentoring new coaches in another language, it is necessary to familiarize myself with the terminology in that language. Having only ever watched PAC training videos and courses in English, it is necessary to learn that language in the new tongue in order to coach effectively to those using it. Herein lies the issue with crossing language barriers with PAC. Teepa does not speak French, or Spanish, or Portuguese, or Chinese, and I don't anticipate that she will be able to learn these enough in order to network.

This is where strategizing with team members comes into play. As opportunities arise to minister to new audiences in new languages, the hope is that the right people who share the PAC vision will fall into place, and be able to facilitate surmounting these language barriers. The team is currently working on materials in French and Spanish. Not just having the materials, because there is a French language DVD, [L'Art des soins liés à la maladie d'Alzheimer's](#), available in the Care Store, but having materials equivalent to what is available in English, having Mentors that can guide learners in different languages. Creating key pieces, like the GEMS® slides that were translated for the Montreal learners to follow along as we practiced GEMS identifications in workshop. Key pieces will help French, Spanish, Chinese, first nations, and more to navigate the world

of competent dementia care with those they are partnering with. Dementia crosses all cultures and languages, therefore, PAC aims to be there crossing those barriers and partnering with people, regardless of background, to restore quality of life to those living with brain failure.

*Sharon has spent her entire nursing career in Long Term Care, most of which has been focused on behavioral support for people living with dementia. She has been trained in several different philosophies of care and methods to help, but none resonated with her as much as PAC. She has a passion for making life better for those living with dementia and helping others to understand the disease and to truly see PLwD (People Living with Dementia) as precious and unique. She continues to work a “day job” as a registered nurse at a Long Term Care facility in Kitchener, Ontario, specializing in behavioral support, while supporting the PAC team as a mentor. In her off time, she spends time with her husband and five children, who range in age from two to nineteen years old. She also likes to take Sydney, her Border Collie pup on long runs to escape the chaos of toddlers and teenagers in her household.*