



Dementia: Mind, Meaning, and the Person (International Perspectives in Philosophy and Psychiatry)

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Dementia is an illness that raises important questions about our own attitudes to illness and aging. It also raises very important issues beyond the bounds of dementia to do with how we think of ourselves as people - fundamental questions about personal identity. Is the person with dementia the same person he or she was before? Is the individual with dementia a person at all? In a striking way, dementia seems to threaten the very existence of the self. This book brings together philosophers and practitioners to explore the conceptual issues that arise in connection with this increasingly common illness. Drawing on a variety of philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, Hume, Wittgenstein, the authors explore the nature of personal identity in dementia. They also show how the lives and selfhood of people with dementia can be enhanced by attention to their psychosocial and spiritual environment. Throughout, the book conveys a strong ethical message, arguing in favour of treating people with dementia with all the dignity they deserve as human beings. The book covers a range of topics, stretching from talk of basic biology to talk of a spiritual understanding of people with dementia. Accessibly written by leading figures in psychiatry and philosophy, the book presents a unique and long overdue examination of an illness that features in so many of our lives.

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From Oxford University Press Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #2915386 in Books
- Published on: 2006-01-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.10" h x .80" w x 9.10" l, 1.09 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 328 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"It is a worthwhile read for anyone working with people with dementia and will repay the time and effort involved. Using a range of philosophical perspectives, it explores some fascinating questions about the nature of self: is the person with dementia the same person as they were before? Are they even fully a person? It answers these questions with humanity, making a powerful case for recognising the inherent personhood of people with dementia."--*Mental Health Today*

"One hopes that *Dementia: Mind, Meaning, and the Person* will inspire further philosophical quests for a more exhaustive and inclusive understanding of personhood and the application of such insights to practice."--*Aging and Society*

"Accessibly written by leading figures in dementia care, psychiatry, and philosophy, the book presents a unique examination of an illness that will affect our lives directly or indirectly and promotes a person-centered approach to dementia care. The book is recommended for a broad audience of health care providers and family caregivers."--*Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*

"This book squares off against the dark history of European culture with strenuous intellectual effort."--*Journal of Interprofessional Core*

About the Author

Dr. **Julian C. Hughes** is currently the Chair of the Philosophy Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Dr. **Stephen J. Louw** is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of South Africa, of the Royal College of Physicians of London, and of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. He is currently Vice Chair of the UK Network for Clinical Ethics Committees. He was formerly Professor of Geriatric Medicine in the University of Cape Town. Prof. **Steven R. Sabat** is Associate Editor of *Dementia: The International Journal of Social Research and Practice*. He has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Greater Washington, D.C. chapter of the Alzheimer's Disease Association and has been a Co-Leader of a support group for people with Alzheimer's Disease.

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