

**Information on the congress "Self-care in the face of dementia. Everyday-life – dignity – spirituality"**

**May 27 and 28, 2021**

**University of Zurich**

The congress "Self-care in the face of dementia" would like to contribute to broadening perspectives on the topic of dementia. Our aim is to perceive dementia sufferers not only as people in need of care, but as people who (like others) take care of themselves and others. The congress will therefore focus on the question of how people with dementia actively (co-)shape their lives and the lives of people in their environment.

The background to the congress is the research project "Self-care in the face of dementia", which is currently being conducted by an interdisciplinary research team (Spiritual Care and Empirical Cultural Studies) at the University of Zurich. Project leaders are Prof. Dr. Harm-Peer Zimmermann and Prof. Dr. Simon Peng-Keller. The project firstly analyses how the topic of self-care is discussed in dementia-related publications and secondly what significance this topic has for professionals in dementia aid organisations. Thirdly, the question of self-care in dementia is examined in personal contact with people with dementia (who have not yet experienced advanced dementia impairments): To what extent is self-care relevant for them and which (different) self-care practices can be observed here?

The objective of the congress is to gather contributions that approach the topic of self-care in dementia from different professional and thematic directions. The interdisciplinary framework of the congress consists of a research and practice context that emphasizes the persistent personhood of people with dementia and is particularly oriented towards their subjectivity. Against this background, the congress is intended to be a platform for an exchange between scientific dementia research and professionals in dementia support, help and care, people with dementia, their relatives and the general public.

For this purpose, theoretical-conceptual as well as practical-empirical contributions are presented:

- With regard to theoretical aspects, the following will be asked: With what philosophical, ethical, theological or other approaches can we reflect on questions of "self" and "self-care" in dementia? What do terms like "self" and "self-care" actually signify? What other approaches are available? What connections can be made to terms such as "self-updating", "self-determination", "self-responsibility" or "agency"? What delimitations should be made?
- With regard to the practical dimension, concrete forms of self-care in dementia are to be discussed: How exactly does self-care in dementia manifest itself in everyday contexts? On what occasions and in what situations does this

happen? What goals of self-care do people with dementia formulate themselves? What individual and interpersonal effects does self-care have? What role does family, community and civic engagement play in this? To what extent can coping strategies, lifestyles, spiritual orientations and non-verbal bodily expressions be approached as forms of "self-care"?

In addition, socio-cultural contexts and frameworks will be taken into account. They can enable, but also hinder, self-care in dementia: To what extent does the socio-cultural environment (family, local community, health and care system, wider society) appreciate and protect self-care practices and aspirations of people with dementia? In this respect, contributions to the congress can also be aimed at criticising the current socio-cultural treatment of people with dementia.