



MASE Monthly Newsletter - March 2018



Proud recipients of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service & the British Citizen Award for work in the Community

Spring is here.... or is it?



How lovely it is to see the daffodils adorning our vases and making us all think of warmer days ahead. We are all desperately in need of some bright sunny days, and something to take our mind of this long, long, winter. Unfortunately the snow has come with a vengeance and people have been struggling to keep warm during this 'blast of cold weather'. It is a lesson to us all to ensure we have sufficient stocks of food in the freezer and perhaps even a couple of pints of frozen milk for days such as these. It is hoped that you have all managed to keep warm and have had sufficient food in store to keep you all going. Lets keep our fingers crossed that as March progresses, the Spring flowers will be popping their heads up to reassure us that yes, warmer days are on the way.

Planning for the future

When someone has a diagnosis of dementia it is so important to plan ahead. Most people automatically start planning for legal and financial considerations. However, just as important is thinking about the person with dementia's life history, who they are and what makes them the person they are. This could involve putting together scrapbooks of photographs and stories, anecdotes, details of childhood and friends, favourite pets, enjoyable games and hobbies - this information will become invaluable as the dementia symptoms progress.



Whether the person with dementia is a partner, parent, sibling or close friend, you are unlikely to know everything about their life. You can make a scrap book, or perhaps a memory box, photo album, or take photographs and videos, the choice of format is entirely up to you and your loved one. Some people can find reminiscing and planning therapeutic.

Recalling stories and insights, can really enhance the reminiscence and could prove to be useful in the future. Not only will everyone enjoy the time spent sharing stories, you will then have a lovely keepsake to refer to, which can also be passed onto future generations.

A life story record is a unique collection of information, memories and anecdotes about the person with dementia. It can cover all manner of things. However, it is a good idea to start talking with the person about their early life and significant events they remember.

You can then go on to explore the person with dementia's likes and dislikes, daily routines or habits.

Consider the following as a starting point:

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| How do they like to be dressed? | How do they have their hair combed? | What do they like to do in the morning? |
| What are their favourite meals? | What foods don't they like? | Do they like the radio on, or to watch TV? |
| Do they go to Church? | What is their favourite type of music? | Do they like pets? |
| Do they enjoy gardening? | How do they take their tea or coffee? | |

As the person's dementia symptoms progress, these specifics will assist anyone who may support them in daily life. It will enable you to build a clear understanding of who the person is and what is important to them.

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Helpline 0300 222 1122 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and Saturday and Sunday 10am - 4pm.

Daphne Sharp ☎ 01785 211140 or 07939 505455
Elaine Dunlop ☎ 01785 823110 or 07812 440226

MASE Co-ordinators
MASE

✉ Daphne.scharp@ntlworld.com
✉ Elaine.dunlop12@btinternet.com

Dealing with difficult behaviour

- Don't try and stop the person with dementia from doing something just because it isn't being done 'properly'. Don't take over - give them time to do things in their own way and at their own pace.
- People with dementia understand far more than they are ever given credit for. Take care what is said in their presence and don't exclude them from conversations or decisions. Exclusion of any kind can produce anger.
- Bossiness is 'just not on'. It's very easy to confuse 'caring' with 'controlling' and nothing winds up any one of us more than the sense that someone else is controlling our lives. If the person we are caring for cannot find the words to protest, then resistance or aggressive actions will ensure. So walk away; try again later or distract with music of their taste.
- Ask the question 'Who is it a problem for - us or them?' If it is us, we should be strong enough to let things ride. Does it really matter that he wants to go to bed with his trousers on, eats mashed potato with her fingers, says there are little green men in the garden? Don't scold, argue, contradict, or try to make things 'normal' again - you will only exhaust yourself. Go with the flow, however bizarre it seems.
- Preserve the autonomy for as long as possible by giving them choice (eg what clothes to wear - and not the whole wardrobe, just let them choose between two garments!) Celebrate what they can still do, rather than bemoan what they can't. Is the bottle half-full, or half -empty?
- There is nearly always a reason for perplexing behaviours - often something/somebody in the environment, or events in their past history. Try to spot the cause and change it if possible. 84% of people with Alzheimer's misinterpret what they see in their environment.
- If they can't enter our world, we must enter their and affirm it. Be prepared to time-travel backwards into their personal history and enjoy fantastic adventures with them in *their 'real'* world instead. If we have to indulge in a few evasions - such as answering the 'fact' that "I need to go home and make the children's tea' with. 'What is their favourite?' *When was it considered a sin to make someone happy?* Failure to recognise an elder family member, or confusing generations may be because the person with dementia is living in their head many years ago.

Always look behind the illness and reach out to the frightened person still in there who needs to feel secure, respected and cherished

Referrals to The Alzheimer's Society

So many Carers are not aware that if their cared-for has received a diagnosis of Dementia/Alzheimer's then they should be registered with the Alzheimer's Society.

Please be aware you are NOT automatically registered at the time of diagnosis.

There is a simple Referral Form for Carers to complete and either email or send by post back to your local Alzheimer's Society. Once this form has been received by the office, you will get a visit from a Dementia Support Worker who will then make sure all your details are updated regularly and most importantly your cared-for will be on the Alzheimer's Society register.

This service is so valuable and it really is in your best interests to get your cared-for registered.

Please speak to Daphne or Elaine if you would like a form to complete.

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: www.themasegroup.com

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