

DEMENTIA ELEVATOR – GENERAL AWARENESS (level 1) Resource Pack

Background

This resource pack is designed to assist with face-to-face group delivery of Dementia Elevator – General Awareness training (level 1). The main medium for the training is the short video that can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V90CFkiUozE>

The main aims of the Dementia Elevator – General Awareness training (level 1) are

- Develop familiarity and awareness about dementia
- Break down the stigma associated with Dementia
- Encourage people to support people with dementia in their community

Activities

After watching the video clip, ask the group to discuss the following:

1. What is the main point / message conveyed in the video?

The possible answers may include:

- Raise awareness
- You can live well with dementia with the right support
- Dementia can affect lots of aspects of your life
- Dementia is difficult
- People with dementia don't want sympathy

Guide the discussion by asking the group to think about the following concepts from the video:

“When I got diagnosed with dementia I decided to stop a few things...”

“What if people knew I had dementia and see me facing it full on...”

“I can change their sympathy to support...”

2. Why is Dementia awareness important?

The possible answers may include:

- It can affect all of us
- There may be people in your family / community living with dementia that you are unaware of and in need of your support
- You may like to ask learners how they think dementia is portrayed in the media? Does it help or hinder dementia awareness?

3. Why might the man with dementia in the video not want sympathy?

The possible answers may include:

- Sympathy might make us think less of people with dementia as equals
- Sympathy stops us from seeing the person and what they can still do
- Sympathy can lead to what is called excess disability

Excess Disability: is more disability than can be explained by dementia alone. A person's functional capacity is greater than that warranted by the actual impairment. In other words, a person's ability to carry out every day activities can be affected not only by dementia but also by other avoidable causes such as lack of awareness, support and understanding from those around them.

- Sympathy may be embarrassing and not in keeping with the man's self-concept.
(For example the man may have been used to dealing and coping with any difficulties throughout his life and this became his self-concept. He viewed himself as able to cope whenever a difficulty has occurred. If he is prepared to cope and live well with dementia sympathising with him because of his dementia may actually make the process of living with the condition more difficult).

4. Can people with dementia still make decisions?

Dementia is a condition where the impairment occurs gradually over time.

People with dementia often refer to living with the condition as a journey. The diagnosis should not equal immediate inability to make decisions. People with

dementia are able to make decisions long into their journey and with the right supports they may not lose this ability at all.

Guide the discussion by asking the group to imagine they had poor memory for:

- Things you had done and places you had been
- What words to use
- What common objects were for or how to do things like cook a meal

How would that affect you?

Would you like the decisions to be made on your behalf because of poor memory?

Would you like people to understand and support you?

5. Our memories are a big part of our identity and it is difficult when they become impaired by dementia as this affects our sense of identity.

Guide the discussion by asking the group:

Would you feel less like “you” if you couldn’t remember details of:

- Where you had been recently
- Who you had seen and what you had said
- Things you have to do in the future

6. If you had any of these problems how would you cope?

The possible answers may include:

- humour
- denial
- distraction
- asking for help
- writing things down
- pictures to show you
- keep things visible

- set a reminder
- place your ideas on our 'coping wall'

Guide the discussion by encouraging the group to think about:

- the means they use to remind them of events in the future: (calendars, diaries, phone reminders)
- how they deal with stressful situations? Over workload? (*'I'll do it tomorrow', 'it will be okay for another week', 'I will just relax tonight and start tomorrow', 'I'll do this instead'*)

7. So how could you help if you knew someone in your community or family with dementia?

Possible answers may include:

- spend some time with people with dementia,
- get people with dementia involved in some activities
- ask them how would they enjoy spending their time?
- Find out more about dementia

Guide the discussion by asking the group who would they go to talk to if they wanted to support someone with dementia?

To learn how you can support people with dementia visit

www.dementiaelevator.ie

IF YOU HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY ANY OF THE ISSUES RAISED IN THE VIDEO OR THE ACTIVITY PACK, THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE HELP AND SUPPORT:

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland

National helpline: **1 800 341 341** Monday to Friday - 10 am to 5 pm and Saturday 10 am to 4 pm

or email helpline@alzheimer.ie

Website: <http://www.alzheimer.ie/services-support.aspx>

Useful Websites

www.carersireland.com *Carers Association, Ireland*

www.citizensinformation.ie *Public Service Information for Ireland*

www.dementia.ie *Dementia Services Information & Development Centre*

<http://www.informationhub.ie/> *The Information Hub, Genio*

www.healthinfo.ie *Health Promotion in Ireland*

www.hse.ie *Health Service Executive, Ireland*

www.samaritans.org *Samaritans provides 24-hour emotional support to anyone experiencing distress, despair or suicidal thought*

Helplines

Alzheimer Helpline: **1800 341341**

Alzheimer's Society: **044 9349828 /086 6078584**

Carer's Association: **057 9322920 / 1800 24 07 24**

DSIDC (Dementia Services): **01 4162035**

HSE: **infoline from 8am to 8pm, Monday to Saturday. Callsave 1850 24 1850**

Samaritans: **1850 60 90 90**

Senior Helpline: **1850 440 444**

Citizens Information Centres **0761 700 4000**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There may also be other questions asked by the group depending on their existing familiarity with dementia. These questions may include the ones listed below; we suggest some answers by guiding to available resources.

1. What is dementia? / What does dementia look like?

This short video developed as part of freedemliving campaign answers this question.

“What's the Difference Between Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RT907zjpZUM>

These videos developed by Alzheimer Society of Ireland show a more personal account of the decisions and uncertainties facing people with dementia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ousrI9RbUxI>

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=10152252759281021&set=vb.10641011020&type=2&theater>

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=10152252744666021&set=vb.10641011020&type=2&theater>

These info-graphics by the Alzheimer Society of Ireland provide some useful facts on dementia. (scroll down to the bottom of page)

<http://www.alzheimer.ie/Get-Involved/Advocacy/Policy-and-Advocacy-E-zine.aspx>

2. Can we prevent dementia?

This video shows some examples of how we can reduce our risk of getting dementia by making some lifestyle changes.

“What can I do to keep my brain healthy”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV2TspM8PDg>

You may also like to look at the following websites, which have useful information about reducing your risk of dementia and keeping your brain healthy

www.hellobrain.eu

<http://www.yourbrainmatters.org.au/>

<http://www.alzheimer.ie/brain-health.aspx>

3. Can we cure dementia?

At the moment there is no cure for dementia, however there are ways people with dementia can maintain their quality of life and ways in which we can support people with dementia to continue to live well following diagnosis

“How Can We Include People with Dementia in Our Community?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P77EuUZyqZ0>

“I have Alzheimer's Disease - What Can I Do to Help Myself and improve my Day to Day Life?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ds9ujRUZyUc>

“Can Your Memory Go Completely?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThnWgsHRI8U&index=1&list=PL55XqDjybyL8SukS3lhrwS39NLOrgs8hp>

For more information about memory loss see the Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s website

<http://www.alzheimer.ie/About-Dementia/Symptoms-Diagnosis/Worried-about-you-memory.aspx>

4. Dementia friendly communities– what are they?

Understanding Dementia Friendly Communities Report (Alzheimer Society of Ireland)

<http://www.alzheimer.ie/get-involved/dementia-friendly-communities/creating-dementia-friendly-communities.aspx>

Joseph Rountree Foundation, Yorkshire, UK Dementia Friendly Communities report.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/creating-dementia-friendly-york>,

Act on Alzheimers, USA. This site provides a tool kit and resources to guide communities in becoming dementia friendly,

<http://www.actonalz.org/>

People with dementia are one of the most marginalised, socially excluded and highly stigmatised groups in society. It has been identified that exclusion from communities is all too frequently a consequence of dementia because the person often experiences reduced ability to follow the normal rules of social engagement.

In order to address the exclusion of people living with dementia, a new initiative has emerged on the landscape in the form of Dementia Friendly Communities. Essentially, the initiative is about transforming our villages, towns, cities and counties into better places to live for people with dementia.

What is the vision for Dementia Friendly Communities?

The overall vision is to reconfigure the communities that we all live in and mainstream dementia into everyday life of that community. The vision is to involve all the stakeholders and members of the community to be dementia friendly.

What are the key objectives for Dementia Friendly Communities?

- Identify the key partners, services, activities and businesses within any given community to develop a local map of ‘the people and the place
- Engage with the key stakeholders by increasing their knowledge and understanding of dementia to ensure that it becomes part of the local agenda
- Challenge the stigma, myths and misconceptions around dementia by opening the channels of communication and removing the barriers to change

- Work with local services and businesses to make the community a dynamic and friendly place for people with dementia, their carers, families and friends to live and work in
- Work together to increase the opportunity for people with dementia and their carers to remain engaged in their chosen activities of life for as long as they wish to.

5. How can I get involved?

The best way to get involved is by supporting people with dementia in your local community.

To help you get started visit:

www.dementiaelevator.ie

<http://www.informationhub.ie/section/dementia>

<http://www.alzheimer.ie/Get-Involved.aspx>