



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 on the Dementia Elevator website at:

<http://dementiaelevator.ie/training-programmes/dementia-awareness-training/level-1-general-dementia-awareness/>

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

- 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:

- Dementia 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 the group how they think dementia is portrayed in the media? Does it help or hinder a more positive attitude towards dementia?

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

(What is Excess Disability?)

This 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 mean an 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?

5. Would you like people to understand and support you?

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.

Dementia Elevator is an education and empowerment programme to help individuals, communities and health systems engage with, and support people affected by dementia. For more information on our training programmes and how you can support people with dementia go to <http://dementiaelevator.ie/training-programmes>

FOR THOSE WHO MAY BE 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 (ASI) www.alzheimer.ie

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.

The Alzheimer Society helpline is a free, confidential service which provides information and emotional support to those affected by dementia or worried about memory loss.

The ASI website includes information about;
services and support for those living with dementia,
tips to live well with dementia,
memory loss, early signs of dementia and risk reduction as well as links to other useful resources.

Other Useful Websites

www.dementia.ie Dementia Services Information & Development Centre - National Centre for Excellence in dementia. Services include research, education, training and printed resources.
Call: 01 4162035

www.informationhub.ie The Information Hub, Genio. This site contains a comprehensive up-to-date selection of dementia resources.

www.familycarers.ie Free phone Careline 1800 240724

www.citizensinforamtion.ie Public Service Information for Ireland Call: 0761 07 4000

www.hse.ie Health Service Executive, Ireland. Infoline from 8am to 8pm, Monday to Saturday.
Callsave 1850 24 1850 / 041 6850300

<http://www.thirdageireland.ie/sage> SAGE – Support and Advocacy Service for Older people
Call: 01 5367330 or contact the Information line 1850 71 94 00 8am-10pm daily.

Third Age Senior Helpline: 1850 440 444



www.assistireland.ie This site contains information on daily living aids, mobility aids and assistive technology. Call: 0761 07 9200.

www.hellobrain.eu Easy to understand scientific information about brain health

www.healthinfo.ie Healthy lifestyle information from Health Promotion Ireland, HSE

www.samaritans.org Samaritans provides 24-hour emotional support for people in distress. Call: 116 123

www.iacp.ie - Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Call: 01 2303536

www.thinkahead.ie A guide for members of the public in discussing and recording their preferences in the event of emergency, serious illness or death.

www.hospicefoundation.ie Irish Hospice Foundation Call: 01 6793188

www.kids.alzheimersresearchuk.org Dementia Explained, A website for children and young people affected by dementia.

www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=2894 Alzheimer Society UK, Dementia resources for children and young people.

OTHER RESOURCES

There may also be other questions asked by the group depending on their existing familiarity with dementia. These questions may include some of those 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 the www.freedemliving.com campaign addresses 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.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>

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=PL55XqDiybyL8SukS3lhrwS39NLOrgs8hp>

4. Dementia friendly communities– what are they?

The resources below have a wealth of information about Dementia Friendly Communities.

Understanding Dementia Friendly Communities (Alzheimer Society of Ireland)

<http://www.alzheimer.ie/get-involved/dementia-friendly-communities/understanding-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