“Remembering Together”

Training in Reminiscence Therapy for Family Caregivers of People with Dementia

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Conference & Meeting, Barcelona November 30th to December 2nd 2011
Overview

Recruitment

Project description

Challenges

Lessons learned

Summary
“Once you’ve got Alzheimer’s you’re branded. That was terrible. I can’t come to grips with that at all. Its is so frustrating. Because I have Alzheimer’s what I say is irrelevant, nobody will listen” (Les, quoted by Jane Crips, 1995, female diagnosed with dementia)

“About a week after Daddy moved to live with us, (as the GP said he could no longer live alone), I had a birthday and Rob (my husband) whispered to Daddy as he was going off to the shops, do you want me to buy a box of chocolates for you to give Sheelagh for her birthday and Daddy’s response was... well it shocked me, he said ....what would I be buying that bitch chocolates for -shes never done anything for me. Well you have no idea how that upset me, this was my Dad, who all his life idolised me (daughter caregiver).
Willem de Kooning, Untitled I, 1981.

Willem de Kooning, Excavation, 1950.
Table 2: Estimated Number of People with Dementia in Ireland from 2002 and 2006 Census as per EURODEM prevalence rates

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Table 4: Estimated number of people with dementia in Ireland, 2006, as per EURODEM and EuroCoDe age-related dementia prevalence rates

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Source: CSO (2006a) Census of Population - Volume 2: Age and Marital Status, Tables 2B and 2C, pp. 16-17 and Table 5, p. 28; Diaz-Ponce, A (2008), Table 2; Persons with dementia as per EuroCoDe age-related prevalence rates, calculated by Maria Pierce, January 2011.
The Medical Model

- Dementia is all about what happens in the brain
- Diagnosis is critically important
- No treatment except for drugs
- Doctors and Scientists are the experts  (Marshall, 2004)
The Brain
The Social Model

- The experience of dementia has multiple causes
- A lot can be done for people with dementia
- We are all the experts
Project Requirements

• Work with family caregivers based in the community
• Attempt to involve at least 6 families
• Run a minimum of 6 sessions, some of which involve active and creative reminiscence together
• Allow time for family caregivers to meet separately from their relatives
• Support caregivers in how to do reminiscence
• Help families to develop new friendships
• Record and share ideas across the partnership
• Share end products – Memory Boxes Life Story Books
• Develop an on-line manual
Recruitment

- Concerted attempts to identify families through the Alzheimer Society of Ireland failed

- Success through the Memory Clinic (Mercers Institute for Research on Ageing) at St James Hospital

- Eight Families – all couples of different age groups

- Commitment to attend 6 Meetings over a 12 week period
Session 1

- Introduction
- Formal presentation on benefits of Reminiscence
- Identification of Theme – School
- Circulation of objects for Reminiscence
Session 2

- Visit to the National Photographic Archive
- Formal presentation by Curator
- Tour of part of Gallery
- Brief Discussion
Session 3

- Visit to Old World Café
- Reflections and Music
- Picture cuttings of old Dublin scenes
- Circulation of Life Story Book for feedback and commentary
- Discussion of theme for Session 3
Clery’s Clock

- Clerys department store is a Dublin landmark, which is steeped in history and memories. For generations, men and women have waited patiently under Clery’s clock for their dates, and it is said that many a romance began at the main doors of the department store. The phrase “I’ll meet you under Clerys clock” has become a Dublin institution.
Session 4

- Separation of Family Caregivers

- Active Reminiscence with persons with dementia led by Daphne Stephenson

- Caregiver issues and advice and information led by Suzanne and 3 exercises from Reminiscence Training book

- Memory Boxes and their Value
Session 5

- Separation of Caregivers and Persons with Dementia & caregiving discussion led by Suzanne – “how was it for you getting in here this morning”?

- Further structured presentation on the value of Reminiscence in every day interactions with PwD

- Reminiscence led by Matthew and Derbhla – courting days and music, movie star quiz

- Joint group and reflections
The Volta

- The Volta Theatre was a film theatre in Dublin and was Ireland's first dedicated cinema.

- The writer James Joyce was determined to bring a cinema to Ireland, so after receiving the backing of his Italian friends, he set up the Cinematograph Volta on Mary Street.

- The building was demolished many years later and in its place now is Penney’s Department store.
The Rotunda Rooms were a very popular ballroom in Dublin during the show band era of the 1950s and 1960s.

The dancehalls and ballrooms in Ireland did not sell alcohol at the time, this was confined to the local pub.
The 1940s and the 1950s were associated with big movie blockbusters like *Casablanca*, *The Ten Commandments*, *Ben Hur*, *Gone with the Wind*, *High Noon*, and many more.

Actors like Clark Gable, Elizabeth Taylor, Marilyn Monroe, Humphrey Bogart and our very own Maureen O’ Hara became very famous household names.
Session 6

- Memory Boxes
- Music – short presentation by Caroline
- Dancing
- Saying Goodbye
Lessons Learned

- Recruitment difficult
- Six weeks probably too short a time
- The stigma of dementia in Ireland
- Project is labour intensive but hugely enjoyable for everyone
- Ethics of stopping a project that seems to bring enjoyment and improve quality of life
Evaluation

- ‘Amazed such a thing could exist instead of being pushed in the corner our situation was worth building on”

- Most enjoyable sessions_
  - memory box
  - school around the corner
  - music

Suggestions: Keep group going “would like to meet up again with the other couples and be included again in a similar reminiscence project

Start up on line network
“My things my stuff has to do with who I am, it keeps me connected to earlier stages of life, it give me comfort, it parts beauty, and gives me special delight that only I can experience. It tells MY story”