



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND

Listening Harder

The Challenges of Creative Communication

Eleanor Edmond

Advocacy and Social Inclusion Manager



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND

Where I'm coming from

- Human rights and Equality law
- Conflict resolution
- Dementia – 5 years with ASI developing advocacy

Aims

1. Keep audience awake if possible!
2. Look at some factors that make certain voices hard to hear
3. Look at some examples of good practice in overcoming the obstacles
4. Bring in some voices other than my own

Disclaimer!

Yes, I know I've left loads out!

NOT an exhaustive approach: aimed at provoking thought and discussion

HIGHLY subjective: challenges and bits of inspiration I've stumbled across over last 5 years of practice

ASK THE EXPERTS: I'm referencing many people's work, some of whom are here.



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY of IRELAND

What makes a voice hard to hear?

- 3 ways in which obstacles work

What makes a voice hard to hear?

1. "Gags"



Speaker's own limitations or beliefs about their limitations

What makes a voice hard to hear?

2. "Earphones"



- Listener's limitations or beliefs about limitations

What makes a voice hard to hear?

3. "Background noise"



The environment: public opinion, organisational culture, political situation etc...

Example: Ageism

an attitude that discriminates against, separates, stigmatizes, or otherwise disadvantages older adults on the basis of chronologic age.



VIDEO

John at the doctor

The antidote...

- Focus on the person
- Advocacy (“towards a voice”)
- Anti-stigma: positive images
- Building intergenerational relationships/solidarity
- The stick: legal rights
- ...

Advocacy:

John and Geri

Anti-ageism

We view Ageing and Older People as a Bounty not a burden and we assert the right of older people as citizens to equal participation in economic social and cultural life and to equal treatment by service providers across the board.

*Older and Bolder "A Bounty not a Burden"
Submission on the National Positive Ageing
Strategy 2009*

Dementia: Gags



- Cognitive impairment
- Loss of confidence
- Apathy/despair
- Increasing disability
- Beliefs about dementia: stigma

Dementia: earphones



- Busy-ness
- Lack of confidence/ knowledge
- Apathy/despair
- Own previous experiences
- Beliefs about dementia: stigma

Dementia: Noise



- STIGMA
- Culture
- Medical/ legal attitudes
- Political will (lack of..)
-

The antidotes...

- Focus on the person- at all levels: political , research, care etc...
- Other ways of communicating: art, music, non-verbal..
- Advocacy, especially..
- Self and Peer Advocacy
- The stick: legal rights



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND

DEMENTIA
RIGHTS
making your voice heard

Dementia Advocacy Service



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND

www.alzheimers.org.uk

**My name is not dementia:
people with dementia
discuss quality of life
indicators**



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND

Scottish Dementia Working Group

Peer and self advocacy



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND

You can't fight stigma
without

Naming the demon



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND

John and Geri



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND

Example: Family conflict



Family conflict: Gags



- Fear
- Guilt
- Pride
- Dependence/ independence
-

Family conflict: earphones



- Fear
- Guilt
- Pride
- "Old stuff"
- Beliefs :stigma
-

Family conflict: Noise



- Relationships
- Issues between siblings!!!!!!!!!!
- Societal expectation
-

Pilot Elder Mediation Project

- ASI/ Northside Mediation
- Learning:
- It's really hard!
- Evaluation to be published next year

Antidotes...?

- Focus on the person!
- Mediation/ facilitation (skilled, specialist)
- Individualised support for all concerned (eg advocacy, counselling..)
- Early intervention- facilitated planning
- ...

A useful lens?



Listening harder..

..is hard.

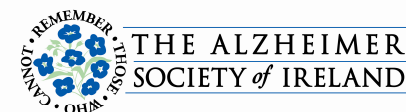
There are no easy answers.

But what's the alternative?

VIDEO **From “The Memory Bridge”**

**Naomi Feil and
Gladys Watson**

www.memorybridge.org





THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND

Thank You for listening.

For More Information:
eedmond@alzheimer.ie



THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND