

St Cuthbert's: Dementia Friendly Small Church.

Model for Dementia friendly church. People, the living church.

- Anyone who holds any office or duty within the church needs to be a '**dementia friend**' or be recognised as having person centred qualities such as those identified by Tom Kitwood's "Enriched model" of care, and become a **dementia friend** at the earliest opportunity.
- The congregation should be encouraged and supported to become **dementia Friends** too.
- The diagram at the end of the pages show the 5 psychological needs, (with love at the centre) that Kitwood stressed are essential to **see the person first** and not the disease process. This constitutes the "Enriched model of care". Note they are overlapping because they are all essential to support the person.
- The needs are as follows: Identity, attachment, Comfort, Meaningful Occupation and Inclusion.
- Remove any one of these needs and you have an unmet need leading to a behaviour that challenges us.
- We can support people to Live well with dementia by knowing a little about the person, their family history and their life story/history. This allows us to link in with all 5 psychological needs.
- Remember we are all unique so one person's needs are different to others.
- Knowing the type of dementia, (there are more than 100) helps us to support the person to live well with dementia. This is because dementia affects different parts of the brain.
- Knowing the type of dementia also helps us link into the life of the person where ever they are in their Dementia journey.
- Remember we meet people at all stages in their journey. People early on will have recall. It may be true to say that this is the time people need our help more yet they do not think so themselves as there is the confusion and non-acceptance in their life.

- You may know someone in their winter years yet they constantly talk about their loved ones as if it was present day yet many are deceased. It is important to live in the person's world, in their time and respond appropriately. Do not remind them of an uncomfortable/sad memory such as "your husband died, remember!" as you are unknowingly but cruelly reminding them of a sad time and remember! that emotion will stay. Change the track of the conversation i.e. is Bert your husband, what job did he have then? This way you are not lying and betraying a trust, simply steering the emotion to be more positive.
- It is important to make the person living with dementia feel that they are the most important person in the world to maintain their comfort and safety.
- Use the person's name to retain their attention and identity, and you may need to do this several times but speak clearly, and in your usual manner, so that you do not sound patronising or be at risk of infantilising, making the person feel like a child.
- Have a 'soft' face/ smile/ eyes, to promote comfort and safety. Be careful your smile is not interpreted by the person as you laughing at them.
- Body language is important to observe as some types of dementias may mean the mood can change quickly and as you notice this (it may be an uncomfortable fidget or a glare) it is important that you back away and allow someone else to take over or divert the thought along a more comfortable path.
- Remember body language can be interpreted wrongly as can the words you use. Think how words have changed over the years and how they change from county to county. We must also remember that we are now cosmopolitan and words mean different things in different languages
- Remember, a fact will be forgotten, but the emotion stays, so make sure that you leave a person with a good feeling.
- If you are a 'greeter'/'welcomer' for example and you are chatting to someone when a person living with dementia walks past you, please acknowledge them albeit briefly otherwise they may think you are ignoring or excluding them and they may present you with those challenges.

- Conversation should be meaningful, focused and allow time for an answer.
- Time is important and the best gift you can give anyone. Rushing will only cause frustration, embarrassment, even anger. Negative or malign feelings always have an opposite or positive. Giving time will create this positive emotional state.
- Care is needed with regard to being tactile and this should be sense checked. If the person starts to retract, then do not touch or hug the person even if it is during the peace as this will be uncomfortable for the person and cause distress.
- If this piece of writing is linked with the piece regarding the fabric of the church, we can enable the person living with dementia to continue sharing the church community for longer.
- There will be a time whereby the person living with the dementia finds it too difficult emotionally and physically to attend church and it is at this point that we need to take the community to them in the form of communion at home, sharing prayers with them or simply talking possibly with the aid of a memory box.
- As the world becomes too busy for these people to cope with, it is more supportive to have a buddy or an enabler to help the person have their spiritual needs supported.
- It may seem that the further along their dementia journey the person is, they no longer understand the meaning or purpose of communion or prayer. Remember it is about the emotion being positive and a feeling of contentment, and who are we to say "They don't understand it any more so we shouldn't be offering the service". We simply reduce the physical things but continue with the emotional service thus fulfilling that enriched model and creating contentment. Remember presented id about being that person, what matters to them.
- Do bear in mind that not all memories are good memories.
- During the service, be aware that people will 'respond' with what they were taught and remember. That may be a different version to what you are using. Just allow this to happen with no reaction.

- Responses may also be delayed due to the fact that the brain has damage which means a message takes longer to make its journey and create a response.
- A social interaction i.e. tea and a biscuit at the end will generally be accepted and meaningful to the person living with dementia.
- This is not an exhaustive factual sheet, and remember you will be in a privileged position supporting these people to Live well with their dementia.

