

Home is Where the Heart is:
Training for home care
supporters for people living with
dementia from diverse cultures

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Department of Health

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The Impact of Life History and Culture on the Journey Through Dementia

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You will need to print copies of the onion exercise for each attendee

Learning outcomes if learners attend all three 90 minute sessions in this programme.

- Develop skills and knowledge in teaching others about person centred care in dementia
- Understand the importance of the cultural context in which care is being given and received
- Appreciate and learn ways to involve relatives and other carers in providing supportive care for the person living with dementia

By the end of this session you should

- Understand the importance of personal history and choices in supporting a person living with dementia
- Recognise the complexity of backgrounds and culture, and that there is not a 'one size fits all backgrounds' care approach
- Develop ways to think and discuss the impact of personal background on the person living with dementia, when possible with the support of their network

This slide contains the learning outcomes for this session.

Think if there are topics you would like to take back to your supervisors

Oh, look what I found!

In pairs:

- Find something (not electronic) that you have with you today that holds a memory you are happy to share with the group
- Tell the memory to your partner
- You will introduce each others object and memory to the group

Give the pairs time to talk to each other. Then, each couple need to introduce the other person via their object.

The conversation afterwards touches on many topics:

1. We all carry with us, emotionally and physically, a lot of information about ourselves and what is important. Usually as a group, people talk about things to do with places they came from, significant life events, important family relationships. Understanding this is part of realising why family and culture are so crucial.
2. What did you feel like hearing your story being told by someone else? This can evoke a range of emotions, people can be worried it will be told incorrectly, angry at misinterpretations or inaccuracies, suddenly find it more emotional, find it embarrassing, feel really nice to hear it being told by somebody else.
3. How did you feel talking about somebody else's life? Responsible, uncomfortable, really trying to get it right.
4. Summary:
 - For most, when our story is heard and re-told to us, if it is done well it is a very pleasant feeling.
 - We do a lot of this on a daily basis, it is important to take time to see how it feels
 - Life history can be told and retold again
 - Being heard and remembered is important
 - Letting a person choose an object plays to their strengths, I share what I choose, not what it says on the document

- This is a really good way to build trust, and get to know people
- Think about if you are happy to share with your clients, and what

5. What to do if somebody closes down - this is fine. There are several options. The first is to ask them to act as observers and reflect to the group about the way they saw the interaction.

Remember, people don't always want to share information about themselves. To do so you need to be able to trust the person you are with and this is a process. This is also true for clients.

Life-history: The really important bits

- Work history particularly early & middle years
- Family roles, childhood
- Past experiences of institutions
- Past experiences of vulnerability & trauma
- Cultural identity – familiar touchstones
- What the basics were called?
- Spirituality
- Likes & dislikes
- Key stories

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Talk through these topics. see if participants have examples.

It is important to spend some time exploring what are the basics called – you can use the example what do you call the last meal of the day – tea, dinner, supper. For example, to some people ‘coming to tea’ means ‘popping in for a cup of coffee’.

Also focus on words that might be associated with personal care, for example, what words have they heard for ‘going to pee’ (spend a penny, number 1, water the flowers, little boys/girls room, powder my nose, piss etc). Words to do with personal care are very sensitive to some. (What do your clients call ‘boobs?’).

These are good topics for people to contribute to but they also highlight the importance of knowing how to talk to somebody about their care and needs in a way that makes sense to them.

Try and draw out why could that be a problem in my care?

Video Clip

Talking about memories

Play the video clip, by clicking on the title of the video. **Depending on your security settings it may open automatically, but you may be prompted to confirm that you would like to open the file.**

We will be hearing Mr Ford, Inez and Jean

When the video clip has finished, ask the group:

1. What is important to know about their past in order to provide them with good support?
2. What is currently important to them about themselves?

What is part of your culture?

Ethnicity, nationality, social class

Religion, beliefs, spirituality

Language

Gender, sexuality and social norms and beliefs

Groups you identify with – professional, political, sports (football fan), interest clubs

This is a complex definition, but the key element is to remember that it refers to a system – a way of working as a team to understand complicated settings.

What is culturally competent care?

Care workers and organisations, having knowledge, attitudes and skills that allow the practitioner to:

- Understand and appreciate cultural differences
- Have the capacity to provide effective health care which takes into account people's cultural beliefs, behaviours and needs.

Why is understanding Cultural Competency like an onion?



This is a discussion:

Before you peel an onion, you don't know what it will be like.

Providing care can be like peeling layers off an onion – it can be painful and make you cry.

People living with dementia in care can be experiencing difficulties and loss, and we need to proceed with care, respect and sensitivity.

An onion as an analogy to understanding culture:

Point to make:

It is complex

It has lots of layers

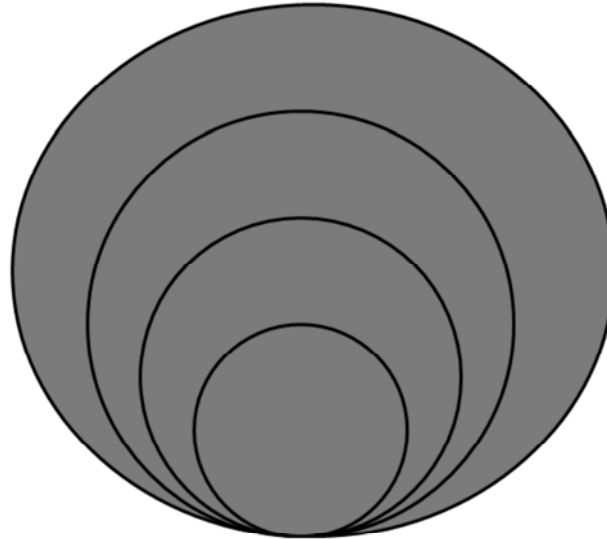
The older/bigger the more complicated it can be

It can be very unpleasant if you get it wrong

It adds depth and taste to everything

Different elements can have different importance depending on the stage and time of life.

Onion Exercise



What makes up our onion?

Ask the group for topics that make part of ourselves:

religion, politics, language, sexuality, lifelong habits, family, community, where I live, where I lived and more.

Get people to try and create their own onion.

What is in the centre, the nucleus of who they are, and what goes around it? What important information is linked to each layer?

Give about 5 minutes. Discuss this with the group. Is it easy to define? Did anything surprise them?

This could lead to two important questions:

1. If they were receiving care, how could this information help?
2. Would two people with a similar 'profile' have the same onion?

Why is Culture important

- People hold different beliefs and traditions about the way they want to live and die, based on culture.
- Consider options like cremation. Is that acceptable to everyone?
- What would it feel to be offered a service which does not suit you?

This slide is an opportunity to highlight how important it is to keep an open mind about different people's approaches, beliefs and preferences.

Key points:

1. Coming from a specific background will not always mean people follow the traditions. In this case, Islam and Judaism don't permit cremations. However, there will be people from those background who would have made that choice.
2. Learn to ask questions in an open and non judgmental way:
Can you describe to me what is important to you when it comes to....?
I find that very interesting. Can you explain to me why you want it that way?

Case Studies

What elements of their life history and culture might be important for any care-worker who goes to assist this person?

Develop a care plan/action plan to provide support for these changes. The plan should identify at least 5 actions which have the potential to achieve a positive outcome.

Key Learning

- Understanding a person's life history can help us know how they would wish to be cared for
- Culture is complex and diverse and will impact on the person's choices and preferences
- The best approach is to be respectful, open and honest

Thank you for listening and
taking part.