



Resources for Evidence at a Glance

Resource for Issue 2: The effectiveness of group cognitive stimulation therapy (CST)

Welcome to *Resources for Evidence at a Glance*. When we come across resources that complement specific *Evidence at a Glance* issues we will send out relevant information.

Group CST depends on carefully facilitated group work with suitable activities, well-paced communication and ample opportunity for enjoyable interaction. The University of Bristol project, *Getting Things Changed (Tackling Disabling Practices: Co-production and Change)*, collected a large amount of data recording people with dementia in group settings. The researchers have developed a series of videos based on that data that prompt us to think about how we communicate and how group topics are perceived by people with dementia. The videos are unique - people with dementia are actors on the videos and provide commentary and critique. These videos are well worth viewing by everybody; our staff, families and people with dementia. If you are working in group settings such as CST with people who have dementia the videos are a must see.

Information about the research project can be found [here](#). A group of people with people with early-onset dementia advised the research group, some were co-researchers working on the whole project.

The research recommendations include:

“Service providers and practitioners

- would benefit by adopting client-led methods of training in communication skills, using materials such as the videos produced by this project.
- Communication in dementia groups should focus on the here-and-now as well as memory talk. Practitioners need to beware that memory loss is not a feature of all forms of dementia and avoid turning a conversation into a test.
- Skills for Care and others involved in training should promote more ‘equal’ conversations where staff and clients can share experiences and memories.” (p.4)¹

¹ Webb, J., Williams, V., Dowling., & Gall, M. (2018). *Good conversations with people with dementia: A key to improvement*. Bristol, England: University of Bristol. Retrieved from [http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/images/gettingthingschanged/policy-briefings/Policy%20Briefing%20-%20Dementia_web%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/images/gettingthingschanged/policy-briefings/Policy%20Briefing%20-%20Dementia_web%20(1).pdf)

Video 1

[Dementia communication training - An introduction to our research](#)

6 minutes

Provides a short introduction to the research project.

Key points:

- Researchers interested in ordinary conversations/communication/interactions - want to make an impact on professional practices.
- Training videos are reconstructions of what the researchers saw in practice.
- Can use training videos individually or in a group. Questions are posed in the videos and also we can think about how we might do things differently.

Video 2

[Dementia communication training - Talking about the past](#)

12 minutes

The second video provide ideas on talking about the past with practical examples.

Key points:

- Some people with dementia have difficulties talking about the past.
- The reconstruction of 3 people with dementia talking about the past provide ideas about what works.
- The next two scenarios with professionals demonstrates conversations that didn't go so well for the person with dementia. These encounters could form the basis for thinking about how the conversations could be improved for everyone.
- The final section focuses on music as a trigger for life memories as well as linking into people's expertise.

Video 3

[Dementia communication training - Quizzes in dementia groups](#)

12 minutes

The third video focuses on quizzes because the researchers noted how often quizzes were used in group work with people who have dementia.

Key points

- People with dementia talk about how they liked a **good** quiz.
- Need to be constructed carefully and facilitated carefully so people are not put on the spot.

- People with dementia talked about their feelings after the quiz- people's feelings varied.
- In the next scenario people with dementia ran the quiz – feedback included feeling more relaxed, everybody wanted to join in.
- The final scenario is a picture interpretation- a quiz with no right or wrong answer.

Video 4

[Dementia communication training – talking in the here and now](#)

14 minutes

This video suggests ideas about everyday conversations.

Key points

- The here and now is important for people with dementia “enjoy each day for what it is and what it gives”.
- Feedback from a person with dementia about a reconstructed conversation noted many topic changes made it difficult. Conversation was too fast, need longer to answer questions.
- Suggestion that staff should follow the conversation of the person with dementia and know what they liked talking about. Link into previous expertise.