

Resource pack for care homes during the Covid-19 pandemic

Developed by the Care Home Pathway
service: Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS
Foundation Trust

March 2020

Reasons for developing this resource pack

This resource pack has been created as we recognise that residential and nursing homes are likely to be significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many care homes have closed their doors to visitors, meaning that residents may lack access to the stimulation, routines and support that they normally receive.

Staff shortages are likely to occur within care homes and this could include Activity Co-ordinators being off sick. This may result in fewer interactions for residents, who could become bored and anxious. This is especially true for residents who need to be isolated away from others.

We know that boredom is a key trigger for distressed behaviours such as aggression, calling out or seeking reassurance. As such, it is important for all staff to try and think about ways in which they can make a connection with residents at this difficult time.

While it may seem surprising to focus on meaningful activities during this crisis, evidence shows that if we keep people engaged in tasks that they enjoy and offer appropriate stimulation then we are less likely to see 'challenging behaviour'. Making a task meaningful does not have to involve 'extra' work; instead, it's about making every interaction a positive interaction for the person.

As mental health services, we are still here to support the care homes but we may need to prioritise referrals (dealing only with the most urgent issues) and are most likely to communicate with you over the telephone.

Here are the contact details for the Community Mental Health Teams for Older People across Surrey & NE Hampshire:

- **Surrey Heath CMHTOP:** 01276 454 100
- **NE Hants & Farnham CMHTOP:** 01252 335 544
- **Guildford CMHTOP:** 01483 443 655
- **Waverley CMHTOP:** 01483 528 116
- **Mid Surrey CMHTOP:** 0300 222 5716
- **East Surrey CMHTOP:** 01737 288 930
- **Woking, West Elmbridge & Runnymede CMHTOP:** 01932 587033
- **Spelthorne CMHTOP:** 01784 884 409

Approaching meaningful engagement during the Covid-19 pandemic: Some general tips

- Try to still support people to have a predictable routine to follow each day (as this provides a sense of control that is important to many people).
- Display activities that will happen in the home on a visual activities planner (make sure activities that are not possible in the current climate are removed to avoid disappointment).
- Individual risk assessments are needed to ensure any activities are safe for people to do (taking into account their Covid-19 status and physical/cognitive/emotional difficulties).
- Build handwashing into the start and end of activities wherever possible and ensure activity items are thoroughly cleaned after use.

Additional links to helpful activity resources

In addition to the information included within this pack, please see the following documents:

- **30 activities that can be done in 30 seconds or less** (taken from the Health Professions Press: The Best Friends Approach to Dementia Care):

<https://www.scie.org.uk/dementia/living-with-dementia/keeping-active/activity-resources.asp>

- **College of Occupational Therapists Toolkit for Care Home Staff** (Has a range of helpful tips for engaging care home residents, including what to do if you have less than 5 or 15 minutes):

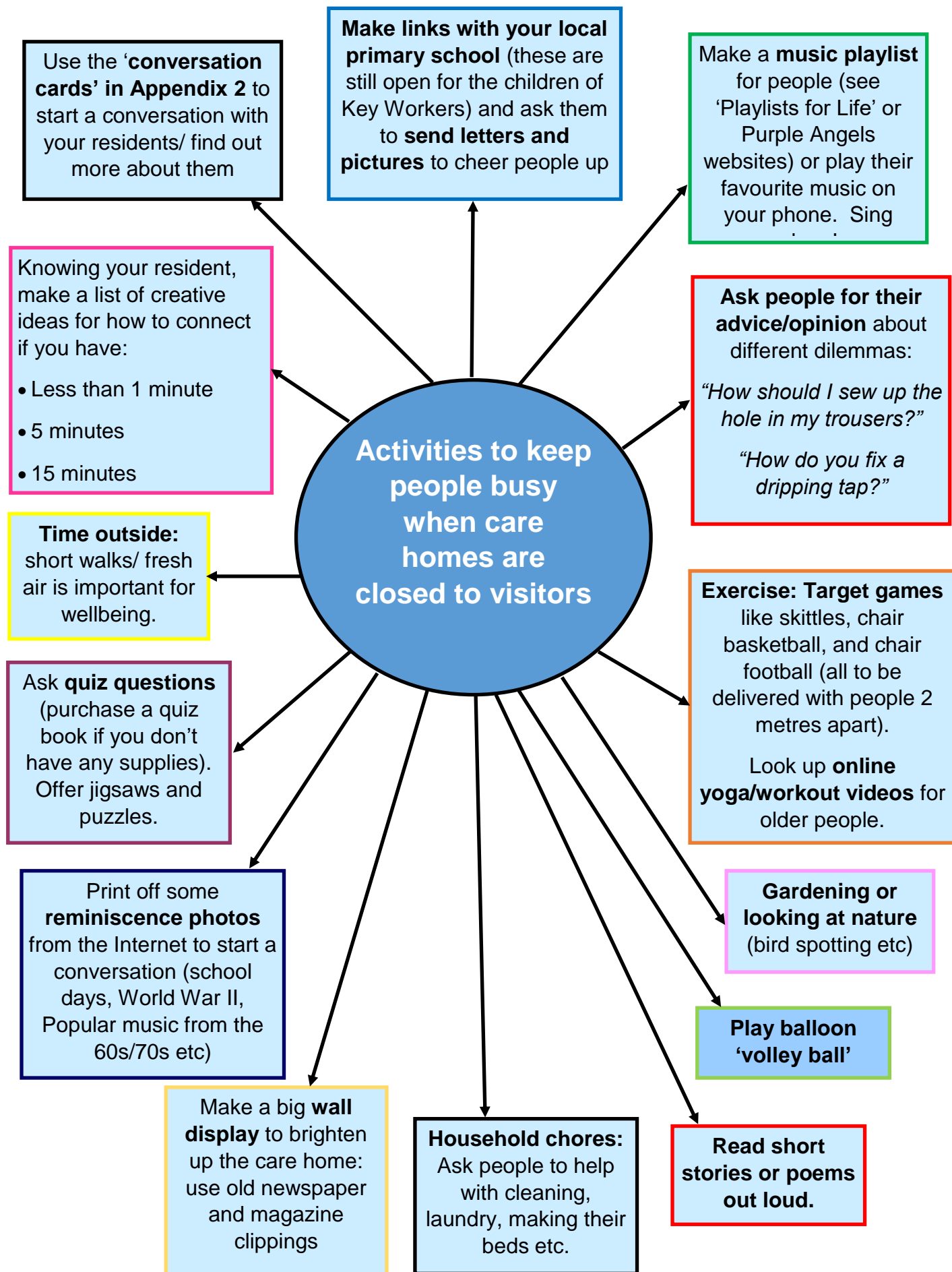
<http://www.cot.co.uk/living-well-care-homes>

Table of contents

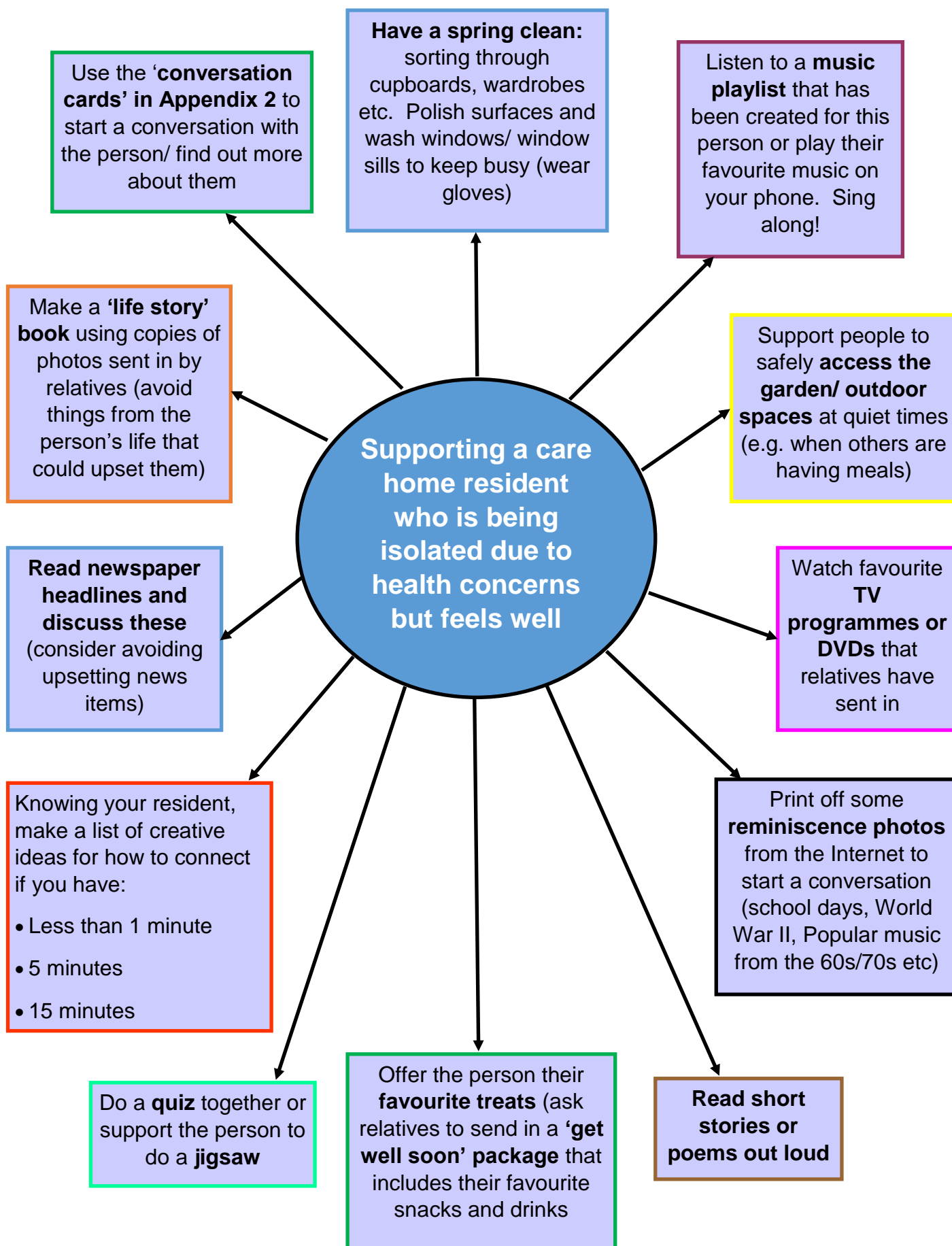
- Page 5: Activity ideas for staff to try with care home residents during the Covid-19 pandemic
- Page 6: Ideas for relatives to still connect with loved ones if they are unable to visit the care home
- Page 7: Ideas to keep residents busy if they need to be isolated in their bedroom (but are feeling well)

Appendices

- Appendix 1: **Tips for dealing with confusion and de-escalating tense situations** (shared with permission from Dr Ian James)
- Appendix 2: **Conversation cards** to start up a dialogue with people you are caring for. Included with permission from Alive Activities but free copies also available via:
<https://aliveactivities.org/alive/en/resources/conversation-cards-for-dementia/>







Appendix 1

Responding to confusion in people with dementia

**Summary developed by the Care Home Pathway, Surrey & Borders Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust, March 2020**

Confusion can be frightening and distressing, not only for the person with dementia but also for the people around them who know that they have misunderstood certain situations.

Confusion can also bring with it one of the greatest challenges for the person who is caring for them: *How to bring peace of mind to a person who believes something so strongly* (i.e. the person believes they need to see their parents, when in fact their parents died a long time ago)?

It can be very distressing to try and ‘correct’ the person and challenge their viewpoint. Instead, try to consider the emotional message that is underpinning their confusion and respond to this.

Often the best approach to this type of situation is to use ‘**validation**’ techniques.

- This involves entering the world of the person and **accepting that what they are saying is real for them**. With validation, we are not concerned about correcting the reality of the person with dementia, but rather **understanding the feelings** behind what the person is saying.
- For example, if the person with dementia says, *"I want to go to my home"*, a carer using a validation approach would not correct the person with dementia by stating that they know live in a care home. Instead, they should **acknowledge that the person is missing their home** and say something like: *‘You must miss your house very much: what was it like and what did you like the most about it?’*
- Giving the person with dementia **time and space to talk** about the things or person who they are missing (be it their parents, children or spouse) is likely to make them feel that they are being taken seriously and soothe their emotions.
- Validation involves accepting whatever reality the person with dementia is in as **being real for the person**. In dementia care, we always try to **‘go with the flow’** so long as it is safe and ethical to do so.

Appendix 1 (continued):

De-escalating tense situations (RAM approach)

Adapted from Ian James and Laura Gibbons (2019) book on Communication Skills for Effective Dementia Care

Summary of the RAM approach: The RAM approach is a useful model for de-escalating tense situations in dementia (for example, when care home residents insist that they wish to leave the care home). It involves taking a ‘**customer service**’ mindset to the person’s concerns and it can be helpful to try and behave like a manager who is dealing with a complaint in a posh department store (e.g. John Lewis).

The model has three parts:

- 1) **R**educe emotion
- 2) **A**ssess the need
- 3) **M**eeet the need

<u>R</u>	<p>Reduce emotion: here we need to control the tone of the argument by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect with the person and suggest you go somewhere quiet to talk their concerns through.• Be respectful (use the person’s name or full title - e.g. ‘Mrs Smith’- to show respect): think how a manager in John Lewis would act in this situation!• Consider swapping in an authority figure to show the concern is being taken seriously (<i>“I’m the person in charge today, how can I help?”</i>)• Avoid saying: “calm down” and other negative statements like “that is not allowed” or “you can’t do that” as this will only escalate the situation.
<u>A</u>	<p>Assess the need: show that you understand the person and want to help by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listening and avoiding pointing holes in their arguments. Try to understand the person’s current outlook (how old do they think they are, where do they think they are etc?)• Watch your body language: Keep a calm, open posture and make good eye contact while the person is sharing their complaint.• Summarize your understanding: <i>“I can see you want to get to Epsom”</i>.• Recognise emotions: <i>“I can see this situation is making you frustrated”</i>.
<u>M</u>	<p>Meet the need- After listening to the person’s concerns, it is important to try and help or solve the problem, which could involve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting the need: If possible, give the person what they are asking for (e.g. if they are asking to speak with their wife then try to call them).• Agree an action plan: If the need cannot be met, try to agree a plan (<i>“let me see if I can find out more information about where your parents are and I will get back to you”</i>): it is important to keep promises and not fob people off.• Offering a compromise: <i>“I can’t get hold of your mum right now but I can try to call your husband, does that sound OK?”</i>

Appendix 5: Conversation cards



Conversation Cards



ABOUT THESE CONVERSATION CARDS

It's sometimes hard to know what to say or do when spending social time with someone whose needs or situation have changed significantly.

These cards aim to support you, as a relative, friend or carer, to build social connections and conversation with an older person who is living in care, living with dementia, or both.

They are suitable for use with any older person who is able to understand spoken questions and able to reply in ways that make sense to you and them. They are not suitable if a person is no longer able to hold or respond to conversation.

The cards are designed as a starting point to stimulate conversation, memories and enjoyment for both of you.

They are not intended to be used in a fixed way, but whichever way works for you and your loved one. We hope you'll find them easy to use at any time, anywhere, whatever age you are.

Be patient – and don't be discouraged. If things aren't working out, take a break or try another time.

Don't bombard someone with questions but look out for what sparks their interest. You're aiming to have a friendly chat, not an interview!

The cards are divided into different topics, with 4 or 5 questions on each side. Have a good look through them before hand – but don't feel you've got to cover all of them! Feel free to mix and match.

Overleaf are some suggestions for getting the most out of these cards.

WHEN SOMEONE IS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a range of progressive conditions that affect the brain. There are many different types of dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common, and vascular dementia is the second most common in over-65s. Some people experience a mixture of these two, but there are many other, less common types as well.

Regardless of the type someone is diagnosed with, each person will experience a dementia in their own unique way.

Someone living with a dementia may be affected by:

- Problems with memory especially in retaining new information
- Difficulty in processing information (including reading and writing, or following instructions) or making decisions
- Confusion (such as not knowing the time of day, or where they are)
- Communicating (such as difficulty in finding the right words)
- Mood swings, anxiety or depression.

Someone who is living with dementia may need more time to think or express themselves but they may still have lots to share, whether it's memories, opinions or knowledge.

You can support a person to live well with dementia by supporting their sense of identity and enjoyment of social contact.

We hope that these cards will help you to do that. Using them may help both of you to recognise and share enjoyable memories and experiences.

They can:

- **Help reconnect and strengthen relationships** with relatives and friends
- **Reinforce a sense of identity** and shared understandings
- **Enhance understanding and enjoyment** between generations
- **Enable people to share knowledge, thoughts and feelings** that come out of life experience
- **Support a feeling of belonging.**

HOW TO USE THESE CARDS

Here are some suggestions for getting the most out of these cards.

- **Print them double sided in colour** (if you can), and cut them horizontally across the centre of the A4 paper so that you end up with A5 size 'cards'
- **Take your time and allow the other person time to respond at their own pace** – see how the conversation develops and flows
- **It's a conversation, with give and take** – let the other person ask you questions too!
- **Share a little of your own experience** – it may encourage the other person to do the same
- **You may need to repeat a question** if the other person doesn't hear or understand first time
- **You'll notice that many questions are put in the present tense** – this is to reinforce the feeling of being able to contribute and to actively participate in life
- **Rephrase the question if necessary** – or you may just need to move on to something else.
- **If someone is living with dementia, it often helps to focus on feelings rather than facts** – don't be afraid to acknowledge difficult feelings, but gently move on to something else.
- **Very occasionally, it's possible someone may share something very personal** or even distressing
- **Acknowledge and support their feelings** as much as you can
- **Respect confidentiality** – but if you have real concerns about any risks to their wellbeing or safety, speak to someone else (e.g. a social worker or the care home manager)
- **Be aware that a person may have difficulty hearing** what you are saying so it can be helpful to speak clearly
- **Speaking in a warm and reassuring way** will help the person feel comfortable and more likely to engage in the conversation
- **Try to keep distractions to a minimum** and engage in conversation in an environment in which the person feels most comfortable and at ease e.g. quiet corner of a communal area if living in a care home or perhaps somewhere out in the garden – weather permitting!
- **Keep the conversation flowing and natural** with prompts that encourage and support. Such as "tell me more about ..." or "that sounds interesting/exciting, what else happened?"
- **You could also use a tablet or phone** to look at pictures or video online that connect with conversation.

ABOUT THE CARDS

These cards are written, designed and illustrated by **Alive, the UK's leading charity enriching the lives of older people and training their carers.**

Since 2009, Alive's vision has been for a world **where care home residents live lives full of meaning, joy and opportunity.**

Alive currently work in over 350 care settings across the South and South-west of England.



We:

Engage older people creatively through meaningful activity sessions

Train and support care staff to enhance older people's wellbeing and deliver outstanding care at every opportunity

Reduce older people's social isolation by connecting them to their local communities

Speak up for the rights of older people in care to those with the power to improve their lives

Depend on charitable donations to deliver our work.

Alive wanted to offer a free resource that anyone can use to connect with someone who is living with dementia. If you would like to give us feedback, or a donation to help us to continue our work then please get in touch.

Contact Alive:

E: info@aliveactivities.org

T: 0117 377 4756

W: aliveactivities.org



FAMILY LIFE 1



- Where were you born?
- Where did you grow up?
- Tell me about your Mother.
- Tell me about your Father.
- Did your parents go out to work?



FAMILY LIFE 3



- Do you have brothers and sisters?
- Did you get on well as children?
- Are you from a big family?
- Did you live close to other relatives when you were growing up?



FAMILY LIFE 2



- Did you get married? Where was your wedding?
- Did you go on a honeymoon?
- Do you have children? Where were they born?
- Do you have grandchildren? Or even great-grandchildren?



FAMILY LIFE 4



- Where is your favourite family holiday?
- Have you ever had a family pet?
- What is your favourite thing to do with your family?
- What is your favourite childhood memory?



FOOD 1



- What do you love to eat?
- What is your favourite food/ vegetable/ fruit/ dessert? Why?
- What food do you really not like? Why?
- Do you prefer sweet or savoury foods?
- What's the most unusual thing you've eaten?



FOOD 3



- Do you like to cook?
- What is your favourite dish to cook?
- What is your biggest cookery 'disaster'?
- Do you prefer tea or coffee?
- What is your favourite tippie?



FOOD 2



- What food would you like to try but never have? Have you ever tried Indian, Chinese, Thai, French food etc, did you like it?
- What is the most disgusting thing you've eaten?
- Do you have a favourite restaurant/place to eat?
- Where do you like to eat?




FOOD 4




- Have you ever grown your own fruit and vegetables?
- What was your favourite childhood food?
- Do you think food has changed over the years?
- Do you think food shopping has changed over the years?

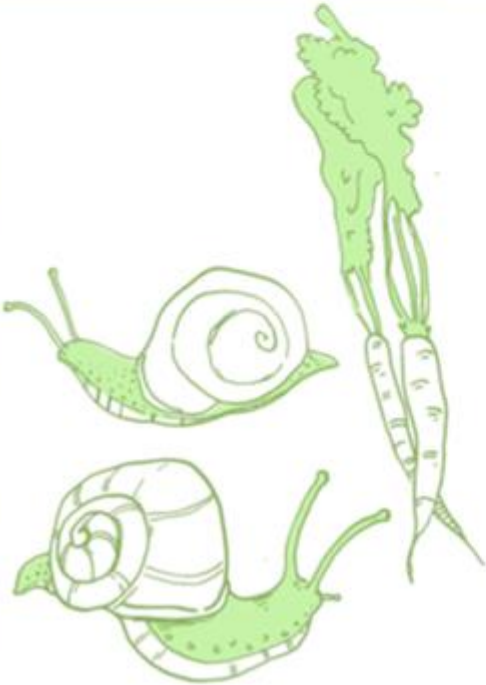




GARDENING 1


- When you think of a garden, what do you see / smell / hear?
- What do you like about gardens?
- What is your favourite season?
- What gardens have you had? (patios, BBQ's, lawns, ponds, flower beds)
- What are your favourite flowers and why?





GARDENING 3

- Do you grow fruit/vegetables? What is hardest to grow?
- Have you ever had an allotment?
- Whose job was to grow vegetables?
- Have you ever entered vegetables or flowers into a competition?
- Do you know any pest control tips?



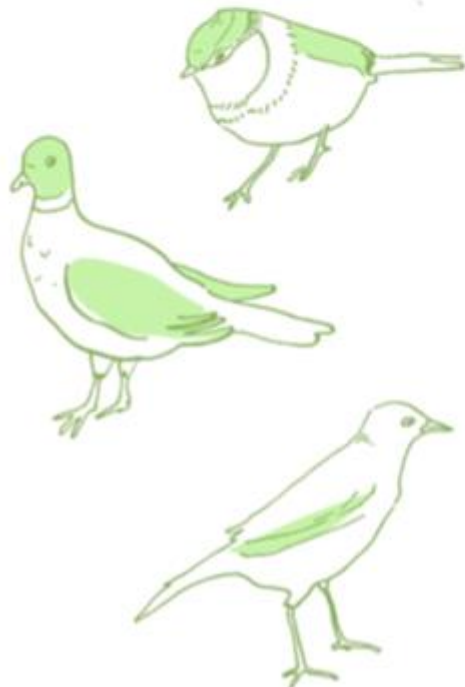
GARDENING 2



- Whose job was to tidy the garden?
- Have you ever used a compost heap?
- Have you ever had a shed?
- Have you ever had a greenhouse?
- Did you have bonfires in your garden?



GARDENING 4



- Which birds come to the garden?
- Have you ever had wildlife or animals in the garden?
- Does your garden have a lawn / a pond?
- Could you play in your garden?
- Do you keep ornaments in the garden?



MUSIC 1



- What kinds of music do you like?
- Is there any music you don't like?
- Do you have a favourite singer?
- Do you have a favourite song?



MUSIC 3



- Have you been to see a live band?
- Where do you like to go to listen to music?
- Did you have a favourite 'pin-up,' when you were a teenager?
- Do you enjoy dancing to music?




MUSIC 2



- Can you play any musical instruments?
- Have you ever played an instrument in front of an audience?
- Have you ever been in a choir?
- Have you ever been in a band?
- Have you ever been in an orchestra?




MUSIC 4



THE
PHANTOM
OF THE OPERA

JOSEPH

- Do you like to sing?
- What is your favourite musical instrument?
- Do you enjoy musicals?
- Have you ever been to an opera?
- Have you ever been to a ballet?



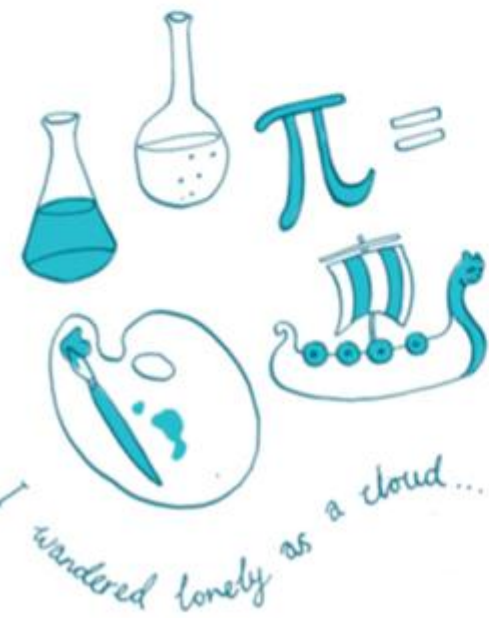


SCHOOL DAYS 1

- What was the name of your school?
- Where did you go to school?
- Do you remember your first day at school?
- Did you wear a uniform to school? What were the uniforms like?
- How did you get to school?




Lighting up later life




SCHOOL DAYS 3

- Who were your favourite teachers? (and why?)
- Who were your best friends at school?
- Which lessons did you enjoy / dislike?
- Which lessons did you find easy / difficult?
- Do you enjoy reading / writing?




Lighting up later life



SCHOOL DAYS 2

- Did you have an assembly in the morning?
- What did you do for lunch?
- Were you ever part of a school play or orchestra?
- Did you go on any school trips?
- What sports did you do at school?





SCHOOL DAYS 4

- What did you do during the summer holidays?
- Were you ever told off?
- Did you ever skip school ('play truant')?
- Have you been to a school reunion?
- How old were you when you left school?






TRAVEL 1

- What is your favourite holiday destination?
- Why does it mean so much to you?
- Where is the most interesting place you've been to?
- Where would you really love to go?
- Do you like travelling/going away/holidays?




Lighting up later life





TRAVEL 3

- What is your most amazing experience of travelling?
- What is your worst experience of travelling?
- What kind of holidays do you prefer? Activity, relaxing, etc?
- Have you ever had to travel for work? Where have you been?
- Have you ever lived abroad?



Lighting up later life

TRAVEL 2



- What is your favourite way to travel and why? Bus, plane, train, bike, etc?
- What is the furthest you have ever travelled?
- What is the longest journey you have ever made?
- Have you been on a plane? Did you like it? Where were you going?




TRAVEL 4




- What can you not do without when travelling?
- What makes travelling more comfortable for you?
- What is your favourite food when abroad or on holiday?
- Can you speak any languages or know any phrases?
- Do you have any family that live abroad?



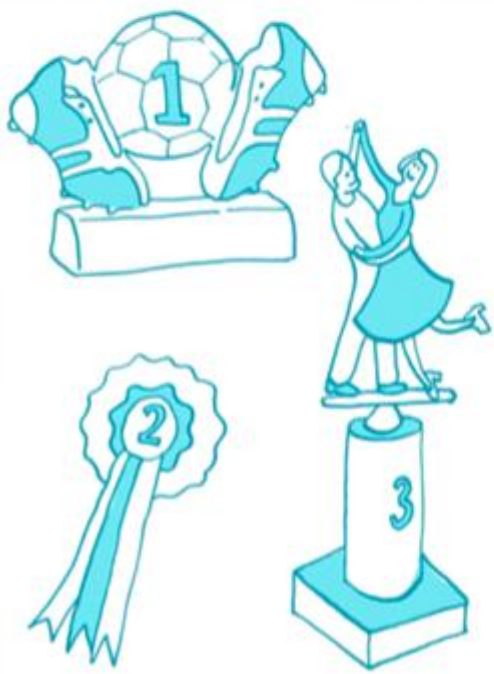


HOBBIES AND INTERESTS 1

- What would you most enjoy doing?
- Have you ever had an unusual hobby?
- Which do you prefer – being active and keeping busy, or sitting quietly with something?
- Which do you prefer – things you can do alone, or things you do with other people?




Lighting up later life




HOBBIES AND INTERESTS 3

- What's your idea of a good evening out?
- Where would you go to meet your friends?
- Have you belonged to any kind of club or society?
- Have you ever won a prize or award for something you've done?




Lighting up later life

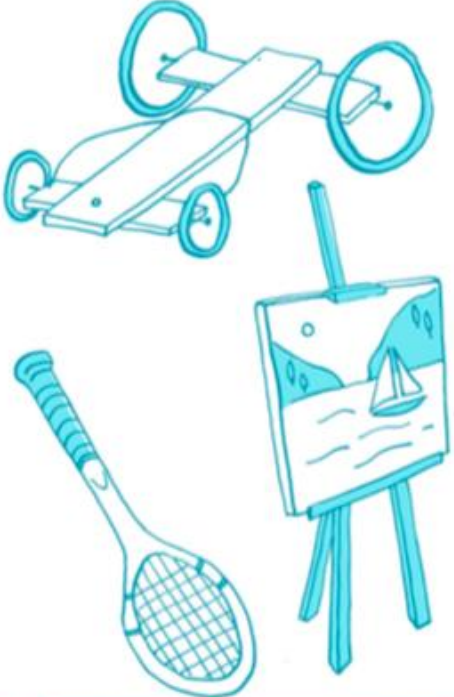


HOBBIES AND INTERESTS 2

- Are you an outdoor or an indoor sort of person?
- Are you a sporty person?
- Where would you most like to go if you went for a walk?
- Are you good with your hands?
- What sort of things do you like to make?




Lighting up later life



HOBBIES AND INTERESTS 4

- What hobbies did you have when you were younger?
- What things would you like to try that you haven't done yet?
- What makes you feel happy?
- Do you enjoy things that present a bit of a challenge?



Lighting up later life

WORK 1



- What's the best job you've ever had? (Including raising a family).
- What's the worst job you've ever had?
- Have you had lots of jobs?
- Where did you work longest?
- What work have you most enjoyed?


 Lighting up later life

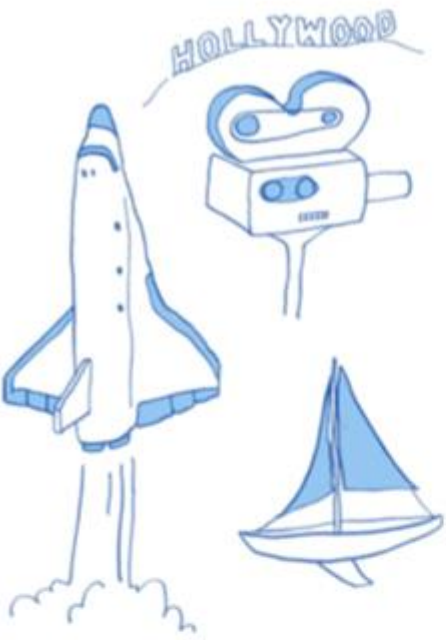
WORK 3




- How old were you when you got your first job?
- What was your first job?
- What did you earn in your first job?
- Did you have to put some money aside?
- Did you have to give some money to someone else?


 Lighting up later life

WORK 2



- When you were a child, what did you want to be/do when you grew up?
- What did your parents want you to do?
- Did you make friends through work, or was your social life separate from work?
- Have you ever done any volunteer work?



Lighting up later life

WORK 4



- Have you been able to pass on things you've learned through work to other people?
- Have you ever had an unusual job?
- 'All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy' – do you think that saying is true?
- Have you ever been able to mix work with play?
- What would your dream job be?



Lighting up later life

GENERAL PACK 1



- Where were you born?
- What food do you really not like? Why?
- What do you like about gardens?
- Can you play any musical instruments?
- What was the name of your school?



GENERAL PACK 3



- Where did you go to school?
- Where is the most interesting place you've been to?
- Which do you prefer – being active and keeping busy, or sitting quietly with something?
- Have you had lots of jobs, or just a few?
- What is your favourite season?



GENERAL PACK 2

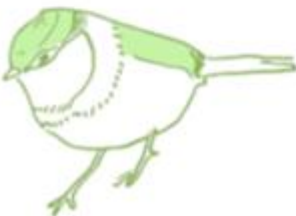
$\pi =$



- Do you grow fruit or vegetables? What is hardest to grow?
- Do you have a favourite singer?
- At school, which lessons did you enjoy / dislike?
- Tell me about your parents.
- Do you prefer sweet or savoury foods?



GENERAL PACK 4



- What food would you like to try but never have?
- Have you ever had wildlife or animals in the garden?
- What is your favourite musical instrument?
- Did you go on any school trips? (if yes, where?)
- What is your most amazing experience of travelling?



GENERAL PACK 5



- What is your worst experience of travelling?
- Have you ever won a prize or award for something you've done?
- What hobbies did you have when you were younger?
- Did you wear a uniform to school? What were the uniforms like?
- What is your biggest cookery 'disaster'?



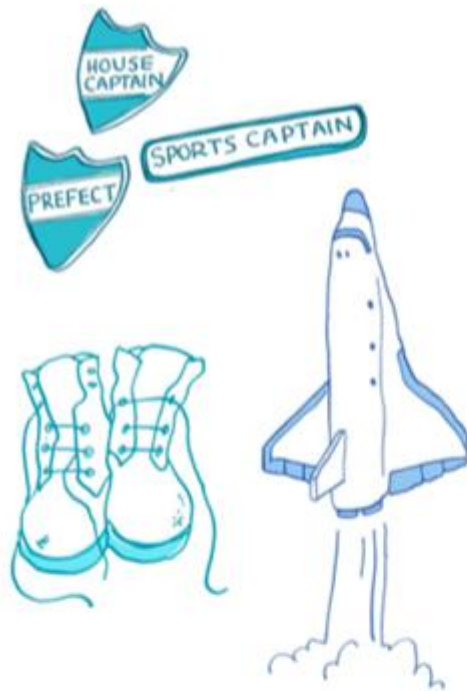
GENERAL PACK 7



- Did you live close to other relatives when you were growing up?
- What's the most unusual thing you've eaten?
- When you think of a garden, what do you see / smell / hear?
- Do you have a favourite song?
- What sports did you do at school?



GENERAL PACK 6



- How old were you when you left school?
- What is your favourite way to travel and why?
- Can you speak any languages or know any phrases?
- Are you an outdoor or an indoor sort of person?
- When you were a child, what did you want to be/do when you grew up?



GENERAL PACK 8



- What would your dream job be?
- What things would you like to try that you haven't done yet?
- What is the furthest you have ever travelled?
- What is your favourite musical instrument?
- Have you ever had an allotment?

