



INSPIRE. MOTIVATE.
SUPPORT!





WE CARE



FOREWORD

When I undertook my Review into the quality of life and care of older people living in care homes, using my statutory powers as Commissioner, it became very clear that the best things that happen in our care homes are often not set out in care plans, but are the little things that make a big difference to people's lives, 'magic moments' recognised by residents and their families.

When care and support is centred around these 'magic moments', residents are no longer treated as people to be cared for, but as individuals connecting to others through shared interests and experiences, something that creates pathways to essential friendships, even for those who may no longer be able to communicate verbally with those around them.

Care staff who share 'magic moments' with residents can respond more effectively to their emotional needs, something that is essential to move away from a task-based approach to care delivery and create care homes in which people feel loved, valued and appreciated for who they are and the contribution that they can still make to the lives of others.

The 'magic moments' in this booklet provide real life examples of how small things, such as enabling a resident to assist in the kitchen, can give individuals a sense of value and purpose, as well as providing reassurance that they matter

and still have something valuable to share. The satisfaction of contributing, however small it may seem to us, can have a big impact upon residents' lives.

Similarly, opportunities to spend time chatting with care staff over a cup of tea, sharing laughter and affection, can have an equally big impact upon residents, making their day-to-day lives more enjoyable and reducing their risk of becoming lonely and isolated, something that, as documented by my Review, can have a devastating impact upon their wellbeing and quality of life.

As the needs of older people living in care homes continue to change, it is vital that we do not lose sight of just how important even the smallest of things can be to an individual, the positive difference that a 'magic moment' can make to their life.

The good practice shared in this booklet is a celebration of the innovation and commitment of care staff across Wales and I encourage care providers to use it to create their own 'magic moments' so that older people living in care homes can have the best possible quality of life.

Sarah Rochira
Sarah Rochira,
Older People's Commissioner





WELCOME

WHY SHOULD WE COLLECT AND SHARE 'MAGIC MOMENT' STORIES?

The idea of this 'magic moments' booklet came out of the Health Care Research Wales funded **Developing Evidence Enriched Practice (DEEP)** project*, kindly supported by Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) which ran from 2014-2015. The DEEP project sought to bring together older people, family carers, frontline staff, managers and researchers across six project sites in Wales and Scotland to explore how they could use a range of evidence to 'make the world a better place' in health and social care services.

One area of interest for project participants was to use evidence to improve quality of life in care homes. More often than not, media attention regarding care homes is focused on the things that have gone wrong, rather than the many things that have gone right. This is both unbalanced and discouraging

to everyone who lives in, visits or works in care homes. By contrast, the DEEP project discovered many examples of kind, compassionate, creative and heart-warming stories of good practice in care homes, which became referred to as 'magic moments'. Such moments were often 'hidden' and did not feature in the written care plans, which are the focus of so much attention. However, when these stories were shared and discussed, they encouraged and inspired others to create their own 'magic moments' in ways that care plans, rules and regulations never could.

We are told that Human beings are 'storytelling animals' (Gotschall 2012) and there is growing evidence to suggest that we learn and develop most effectively through the sharing of stories. The aim of this booklet is therefore to share a range of 'magic moment' stories in care homes, in the hope that they will inspire learning and development in care homes across

Wales. The DEEP project found that whilst people are often 'moved' by reading or hearing stories, they have a greater impact if they are subsequently explored and discussed with others. The final chapter of this booklet therefore provides some simple exercises that can be used to help staff, family carers and residents explore the 'magic moments' and use them to shape their own learning and development.

THE JRF PROGRAMME: "A BETTER LIFE"

The five year JRF programme 'A Better Life'[†] sought to discover and share the things that matter most to older people with high support needs regarding quality of life. The programme identified seven challenges, which the DEEP project encouraged participants to explore and address.

* <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/developing-evidence-enriched-practice-health-and-social-care-older-people>
† <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/better-life-valuing-our-later-years>

These challenges were:

- We need to promote positive images of old age – no them and us.
- We need to see the person behind the label or diagnosis.
- We need to ensure that all support is founded on meaningful and rewarding relationships.
- We need to focus on the strengths of older people and create opportunities for them to give as well as receive.
- We need to treat older people as equal citizens with rights and responsibilities.
- We need to listen and respond to what older people say.
- We need to innovate but also pay attention to the little things that can make a big difference.

This collection of 50 'magic moment' stories illustrate powerfully how these challenges can and are being addressed in care homes in Wales. We hope they inspire more magic moments across Wales.



500

Magic Moments
IN CARE HOMES



**INSPIRE. MOTIVATE.
SUPPORT!**

1

LIFE'S A BEACH FOR CARE HOME RESIDENTS

In response to our residents sharing precious memories of happy summer holidays, we have installed a caravan in some spare garden space. We have also imported a shingle and sandy shore, beach hut, deckchairs and colourful umbrellas where they can relax, share an ice cream and even build sandcastles. Two of the residents said how lovely it was to kick off their shoes and feel the sand between their toes. The beach has been a huge success and residents love popping into the caravan and stimulating happy memories of yesteryear.

2

A LINK WITH THE PAST

We observed a person quietly sitting in their bedroom. When a lamb was brought into the home and introduced to the person we noted a significant change in them. They became far more alert and enthusiastically reflected with care staff about their life working on a farm, the animals they had kept (including sheep) and the memories the visit had evoked.

3

FOOTBALL CRAZY

One resident has always been a Manchester United fan. His room has been decorated out with Manchester United things – so much so, that we are running out of space. In February we took him to a football match in Swansea so he could watch Manchester United play against Swansea City. The trip has really helped as he was feeling quite low in mood prior to this. He now wants to go back to Manchester and see his team play on their own ground.

4

DOLLS ARE NOT JUST FOR CHILDREN

The manager had been told that dolls have been used in care homes, but had some misgivings about doing it. She decided to try it with her granddaughter's very lifelike baby doll which she showed to female residents with dementia. They immediately started to cuddle the doll as a baby. One resident who likes to hold it says she knows it's a doll but enjoys holding it anyway. Another resident who doesn't have children was very taken with it saying she 'had waited 27 years to do this'. Another resident who is sometimes very unsettled is calmed by being given the 'baby' to hold.





5 RESIDENTS CAN DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES

Some people think dolls are too babyish for older people, but we decided to put out a doll on a chair, so that residents could make up their own mind. One resident picked up the doll and cuddled it – you could see the love and happiness in her face.

6 MEETING UP WITH AN OLD FLAME

Members of staff in the care home were delighted to witness the reunion between one of their residents and a woman he met during the war. She came to Pembrokeshire to work as a land girl; he worked on a nearby farm and a romance blossomed. The woman went back to her home up North and they never saw each other again, until she came into the care home for a period of reablement. Everyone was very interested to hear about the work they were involved in for the war effort especially as they had dressed as land girls for a war themed event recently.

7 LOOKING AFTER ANIMALS

One resident was very interested in wildlife and would put food out for badgers and squirrels. The manager used an iPad to look up information and images of animals on the web and spent some time sharing them with her.

8 SHARING THE JOY OF STAFF GETTING MARRIED

Our home was the venue for a re-enactment of a wedding of two of our members of staff on the 11th of December 2015 who originally 'tied the knot' earlier that year. Residents were delighted to share in the lives of these staff and celebrate with them. The home was decorated for the wedding by making the dining room look like the venue for the wedding breakfast and the kitchen made a three course wedding meal to have with fizzy drinks. A mock service was performed by the activities coordinator and the resident all sang a hymn to celebrate the wedding. The married couple wore their outfits from the wedding day, their children wore their outfits, and all of the residents wore wedding outfits with button holes. It created a real sense of community.

9 ANIMAL MAGIC

Enoch, a 22 year old donkey visits our care home. He switches on residents' smiles as soon as he enters the room. In return, he clearly loves the attention and is so well behaved. He gets kisses, pats and hugs and twizzles his ears around to have them stroked. One resident, a 90 year old retired science school said *"Enoch makes my day. He is an amazing animal. We are blessed at this fantastic home to have him and his stable-mate Polo visit us so often because they live nearby"*. A carer who visits his wife who is a resident with dementia said *"Jean just lights up when she sees Enoch. It is wonderful to see the stimulation and interaction between this incredible donkey and the residents"*.

10 THE POWER OF MUSIC

A resident who doesn't speak at all was given headphones and an iPod with old hymns on it. When the hymns were played she started singing (she used to be a church organist). When sitting at a table, she would also use the table as if it was a piano.

11 PRESENTING AT A CONFERENCE

One of our residents was invited to be a speaker at a conference about 'magic moments' in care homes. This was a big occasion for him and he enjoyed getting dressed for the occasion, sharing his story and making notes during the conference discussions. He was continually writing his thoughts down on pieces of paper, which helped him to develop his thoughts and ideas for tomorrow and the future, including his wish to visit France.

12 DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY

A gentleman in our service was unable to sleep and was not interested in the TV. One of the night staff put music on and danced with him. He smiled and really enjoyed this. He later settled for bed when he was ready.





13 FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

One member of staff enjoys sharing breakfast with a resident, during which time they talk about what the resident used to eat when they were young and living at home.

14 SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS

We observed one person sitting in the communal garden for a period of thirty minutes. During this time we observed that although the individual was sitting next to another person they were not engaging and appeared quiet and withdrawn. When a member of staff noticed this, she sat with them and helped them to complete a puzzle. The effect was striking as their whole demeanour changed, their face 'lit up' and they were seen smiling, laughing and actively engaged with the staff member and the activity.

15 I GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIEND

During a lunchtime period we observed a carer assisting a person to eat and drink. The carer positively engaged and warmly chatted with the individual they were supporting, they confirmed what the person wanted to eat and drink, regularly checked that they were enjoying their meal, and enthusiastically encouraged them throughout their meal. This had a positive effect on the individual as we saw them smiling and laughing with the carer, they ate all their meal and thanked the carer when they had finished their meal.

16 KEEPING UP TO DATE

I observed a member of staff take a moment out of her routine, to read a newspaper with a resident. She sat next to the individual and spent twenty minutes talking to them about the news of the day. During this time we observed the person become engaged with the activity, the carer and their surroundings. They were seen discussing the pictures and events reported in the newspaper with the carer, pointing at different images and becoming far more alert for the period of the activity.

17 GETTING OUT

A retired postman in our care home really missed his walking, so we arranged for a Red Cross volunteer to take for regular long walks.

18 MAKING MOVING ON MORE BEARABLE

One of our residents had to leave the care home because her care needs increased. We made sure that every member of staff saw him personally to say goodbye. On the day he left, staff gathered at the door to wave him off. It made the transition easier for them.

19 YOUNG AND OLD

A group of children from the local nursery school visited our care home and interacted with the residents – they loved it.

20 A RISK WORTH TAKING

A few years ago, whilst working in a mental health service, I supported two service users to drive to Holland together in a camper van – they got lost, but were found and had so many lovely stories to share on their return. This trip helped them to relearn their highway code, strengthened their friendship, and enabled staff to practice multi-agency working across Europe!

21 HOME FROM HOME

One of our residents was from Italy and used to run the local chip shop. We made a special 'Italian day' for him, which he really enjoyed.

22 KEEPING IN TOUCH

One of our residents had family who lived abroad – we made Skype available to him, so he could keep in contact with them





23 DOING THINGS TOGETHER

We always have summer fetes and fairs, which the residents get involved in and always enjoy.

24 A REAL TONIC!

One of our residents was on peg-feed. He liked his beer so we gave it him via the tube, especially on special occasions.

25 SHARING GRIEF

One of our residents was seeking his old friend, who had unfortunately died. However, we helped him to meet his friend's daughter and they were able to reminisce together, which was good for BOTH the resident and the daughter.

26 FAMILY PETS

We allow staff to bring in dogs, other pets and animals into the home, which are really enjoyed by the residents.

27 THE BENEFITS OF A TEA SHOP

We have set up a tea room in our care home. A resident now 'goes out' to the tea room and feels she has been out for tea and cake. Her persona changes and she has become more relaxed and happy and also eats and drinks more. Another resident was feeling down after her friend passed away. She isolated herself and would only converse with her daughter. The daughter volunteered to work in our tea shop and now her mother helps her to run it every Thursday morning. This has enabled her to make new friends and she is now joining in other activities.

28 LEST WE FORGET

A 92 year old gentleman who is a war veteran was invited as a VIP guest to the last night of the proms. The family were unable to take him, so we took him and he received a standing ovation and was out until 11pm. He felt so proud.

29 A CHANGE OF SCENE

We have a service user who goes out to Tesco twice a week to buy some of her own groceries and clothing. She likes to dress for the occasion and have make-up on (something she is not interested in on other days). She is a regular visitor to their cafe and the staff have got to know her. They even bought her flowers and said 'happy birthday' on the tannoy recently. She also buys things for other service users.

30 STOP THAT CAR!

One care home residents used to drive a particular old car, which the manager saw driving around one day. He followed the car to a petrol station and asked the owner if he could bring it to the home, which he did. The man loved the smell and feel of the car. It took him back in time and made him feel good inside.

31 A LAST STRAW?

One care home resident was taken to see her son's lambs on his farm. She took a handful of straw, put it in her pocket and took it back to the home, where it takes pride of place in her room.

32 LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT

A nursing home resident talked about how when she lived at home she would buy a prawn cocktail once a week as a special treat. She really missed this when she moved into the care home, so we arranged for her to have a mini-fridge in her room, so she could stock her own little treats.





33 THE POWER OF A NECTARINE

A nursing home residents gets a sense of purpose and meaning through visiting some of the other residents who don't get any visitors – *"it gives me something to live for"*. On one occasion she bought a few nectarines and gave one to each of the people she visits. This simple act of kindness made one of the people cry with gratitude.

34 SINGING WITH BETTI

One service user has really advance dementia, but we discovered that she used to be a singer. When encouraged, she still sings beautifully and when she sings the other residents around her start to join in. We don't need an entertainer to come in, as she quietly leads her own 'table-top' dementia choir!

35 SPOOKY? - NO, QUITE THE OPPOSITE

I find it really hard to sleep at night and get anxious. The girls on nights are great – they play silly games, like putting a sheet over their heads and pretending to be ghosts or jumping into bed with me – it makes me laugh and feel safe and loved at the same time.

36 MY OLD TEACHER

I was walking past a room in our care home, when I noticed my old school teacher. She had recently moved into our care home and looked a bit anxious. I went into the room and introduced myself and we talked together about when she used to teach me. This had a huge impact on her – and me! It made her feel more settled and made me feel good too – a link with my past.

37 NOT FEELING USELESS

One of the service users was feeling very down. When he was invited to join in a meeting about the Joseph Rowntree project he said 'I don't know why you are involving me in this, because of my age, because of my memory loss, because of my uselessness'. He was well looked after by staff but did not feel he had anything to live for. It turned out that he used to be a strong man who raised a lot of money for charity and that he became a strong man because he was bullied at school. With help from someone, he wrote a simple story about his life as an anti-bullying book for children, which he was proud to share. At the end of the project, he said 'thanks for allowing me to give back'.

38 EVERYONE MATTERS

I have a really close relationship with one resident. A while ago, I was off sick for a couple of weeks. When I went back to work, the resident began to cry when she saw me, and we had a cwtch. It was nice to know that I was important to her and it made us both feel good to be reunited.

39 £15 WELL-SPENT

One resident couldn't say a bad word about the staff in our care home, but after joining in a few meetings about what 'a better life' would like for her and other residents, she said she would really like to make her own cup of tea and even better, to make one for a fellow resident. We don't allow kettles in the care home in case someone gets scalded, but when an Occupational Therapist came in to see the person, she said that she would be fine using a little travel-kettle which would cost no more than £15. We didn't realise how important such a little thing could be or how simple it was to achieve.

40 THERE'S MORE TO ME THAN MEETS THE EYE

I was taking one of our residents somewhere in the car and we began to talk about her life. I know this resident had never been married and I had made assumptions about her past life as a spinster. I was therefore shocked and amused me when she said to me *"I may have spent most of my life on the shelf, but that doesn't mean I was never taken down and dusted from time to time"*. This made me laugh and challenged my misconceptions of older people.

41 MAKING THE BEST OF THE PUB NEXT DOOR

We have three residents who use our local micro-brewery. They have regular seats at a table and we escort them in without taking away their dignity and independence. We have a good relationship with the landlord who is able to contact us to escort those who need it back to the home. This has enabled residents to meet locals and create new friends and has also led to a close mutual friendship between two residents.



42

A CONNECTION WITH THE PAST BRINGS A TEAR TO THE EYE

After managing to find a farmer who was hand rearing one of his lambs, a four day old lamb arrived at my nursing home in a bucket, bleating and indignant. I took him round to all of the residents and the delight was evident on each and every face. One of my final stops was to a 97 year old blind lady whose dementia had been compounded by a psychotic episode. This had left her quite traumatised and unwilling to engage. I put her hand on the lamb and she kept it there. Gradually her fingers wound into the thick wool and she held her arms out to take the lamb from me. She pulled it to her and buried her face into it breathing in the warm, oily scent. After a minute a tear fell down her cheek and she lifted her head up and said, *"I was in the land army, I cycled six miles every day to the farm where I worked and I was in charge of the lambs. Their fleeces would help defrost my fingers. I'd forgotten..."* Moments don't get any more magical than this.

43

A TASTE OF SOMETHING DIFFERENT

In our care home, we have a resident from Greece and another from the Caribbean. We encouraged them to share aspects of their cultural heritage with the other residents of the care home. The resident from Greece enjoyed cooking and with the support of the care home chef, she prepared and laid on national dishes for the other residents. The resident from the Caribbean was encouraged to invite his friends to the care home and entertain the residents with a local steel band.

44

GETTING OUT IS SO IMPORTANT

A free taxi service is provided for relatives who cannot visit the places they want to go via public transport, which this has had a huge impact on the quality of life of residents and relatives who are now able to spend time with each other on a regular basis.

45

PLEASE DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

One of our resident's with advanced dementia was included on a trip to watch a ballet in the Millenium Centre in Cardiff. She had not spoken for a very long time and it could have been assumed that she would get nothing out of the visit. However, we have a very inclusive ethos in our care home – 'we all go or none of us go'. Five minutes into the production she came 'alive', saying *"oh look at them on the stage"* and she clearly enjoyed the rest of the performance.

46

LISTENING TO OUR RESIDENT AND SPICING THINGS UP!

I'd like to share a recent magic moment regarding our Sunday roast lunch. Our meals are now supplied by Apetito, with which we are very happy. However, the feedback from our residents was that they weren't very happy with the potatoes, gravy and stuffing. We immediately set in motion cooking our own potatoes, making our own gravy and stuffing to improve the meal, and now everyone is happy with Sunday lunch.

47

IT NEED NOT COST THE EARTH

During residents' meetings one man used to talk about his love of dogs and game shooting and spoke about how he had working dogs when he was younger. To support his interest, the care home owner subscribed to two shooting magazines so that the man could read all about working dogs and view pictures of organised shoots. Quite often a photograph would appear of the Queen on a shoot. This service user always used to talk about how he once had an opportunity to shoot with the Queen. Carers observed that as soon as they started to talk to this gentleman and look at the pictures in the magazines his mood would lift and he was able to talk for long periods about dogs and the best way to train them.

48

SHOPPING AND EXCHANGING GIFTS

Bon Marche came into the home and set up shop – a lot of residents enjoyed having the opportunity to shop. There are two couples living in the home and both husbands bought their wives a new dress for Christmas. One of the husbands told the care staff how good it was to be able to shop with his wife, something he hadn't done for years.



49 STORIES AND TALENTS TO SHARE

One of the residents in the nursing home was the first woman to walk across the Bosphorus Bridge from Europe to Asia! It never ceases to amaze me how older people, who think they have nothing to share, have the most incredible stories. She won awards for quilting and brought me one of her folders of press cuttings and samples of her amazing work to photograph. When I shared this with other people, there was a lot of interest and she is now going to giving a talk on the story of her quilts to fellow residents and people from the local Women's Institute next Friday – isn't this a lovely example of an older person having something to give as well as receive. She feels good about it and other people have something to look forward to.

50 TAKING A DIFFERENT APPROACH

May's bath time was always a trigger for staff anxiety. May was labelled as 'aggressive during personal care tasks'. Staff would swap shifts rather than be on shift for her bath time. You could feel the tension in the home and see the other residents becoming unsettled as staff prepared themselves for her bath time. May was always blissfully unaware that her bath time was looming but could feel the tension building too. As two members of staff approached, she would become anxious and fearful "It's time for your bath May" a member of staff would say standing over her. Realising that this cycle needed to be broken; the manager introduced a doll to May. May held him closely, told staff that the doll was a boy, and accepted bath time holding her baby. She bathed him as staff bathed her. Her son told us "That must have been how she bathed me". May showed no agitation again and the 'aggressive during personal care tasks' was removed from her care plan.



CONCLUSIONS

& INTRODUCTION TO REFLECTIVE EXERCISES

CONCLUSION

I hope this little 'magic' booklet offers some inspiration and stimulates creative thinking into what makes lives, for older people living in care homes that little bit more meaningful and fulfilling.

The words of the songs 'Little Things Mean a Lot' and 'Magic Moments' sum up the importance of little acts of kindness. Knowing what matters most to someone can be used to make their lives more meaningful as well as creating a feeling of self-worth.

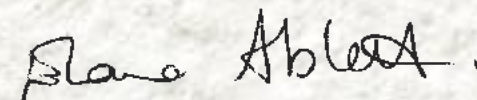
This booklet has been inspired by the work of the Developing Evidence Enriched Practice (DEEP) project in Wales and very grateful thanks goes to Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) not only for supporting us in the production of this booklet, but also for providing funding for learning events held in Carmarthenshire and elsewhere in Wales to enable the sharing of good practice and promoting the DEEP approach to practice development in line with the National Outcomes Framework as set out by Welsh Government.

The stories in this booklet are real experiences shared by real people living in, visiting and working in care homes in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and elsewhere in Wales

The Carmarthenshire 'Magic Moments' have been observed by a range of visiting professionals including my team of Performance & Quality Contract Monitoring Officers, Jo and Tracey, along with CSSIW Inspectors and providers themselves.

In the closing section of this booklet are few simple exercises, to help you and your colleagues reflect on the 'magic moments' and explore the values, ideas and issues that they raise. I would encourage you to try these out, and use your reflections to inspire and develop your own 'magic moments'.

Make someone's day more meaningful and fulfilled today and every day... and feel more fulfilled yourself.



Elaine Ablett,
Performance & Quality Contract Officer,
Carmarthenshire County Council

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE 1

Reading these 'magic moments' will invariably stir an emotional response. We are all touched by stories. However, there is a danger that we are touched, but not moved to do anything different as a result of this.

One of the best ways for stories to support learning and practice development is to share and explore them together, in small groups. This allows participants to think and talk about some of the values, ideas and issues that are contained within the stories. In so doing, participants begin to shape and develop their own thinking and the thinking of others. As a result, new ideas and possibilities emerge.

We have developed an approach to facilitate these kinds of conversations, called Exploratory Talk, which has been used to support group learning with both children and adults.

This is talk in which every member of the group is invited to contribute; reasons are asked for and given; contributions are treated with respect. A level of challenge is expected, and ideas are chained together, elaborated and explained as the discussion proceeds, with the group aiming to reach a negotiated agreement.

Developing Exploratory Talk around 'Magic Moments' by Lyn Dawes and Neil Mercer

Crucially, the group will encourage speculation and hypothesis. Discussion groups begin by agreeing on a set of 'Ground Rules for Talk' which will generate Exploratory Talk. The group takes responsibility for its discussion and no roles are allocated.

Ground Rules for Exploratory Talk:

- Everyone will be asked to say what they think.
- We will listen and think about all points of view.
- Ideas will be challenged; reasons will be asked for and given.
- We all share all relevant information.
- We can ask for clarification, explanation, elaboration, or speculation.
- We work towards a group understanding of each other's points of view.

By ensuring that the language of reasoned discussion is used, the group can expect to understand more about the topic or 'magic moment' and more about one another; and can frankly share areas of uncertainty and lack of knowledge in a 'safe' forum. Some of the 'magic moments' in this book may appear risky to some and not to others. These different perceptions can be valuable in challenging assumptions and uncovering hidden issues that may need to be addressed.



RE1 CONTINUED...

EXPLORATORY TALK REQUIRES:

- A topic which merits discussion – for example ‘magic moments’ from this booklet
- Time in which to agree or generate Ground Rules for Talk
- Time for the discussion to unfold
- A clear use or purpose for the products of the discussion – for example, what are the implications of the ‘magic moments’ and our discussion on our practice?

The chance to hear and consider a range of points of view in equitable discussion is invaluable. In addition, such reasoned discussion enables participants to assimilate the tools of reasoning which benefit thinking when subsequently problem-solving alone.

FACILITATING AN EXPLORATORY TALK DISCUSSION AROUND ‘MAGIC MOMENTS’:

The person facilitating the discussion should select a number of ‘magic moments’. For groups of 6 or over, ask participants to organise themselves into groups of three, trying to choose people that they may not know so well.

1. SORT OUT THE GROUND RULES FOR TALK

Ask the whole group to suggest four or five ‘rules’ which will help to ensure good discussion. No need to write these down – simply repeat and reinforce the suggestions that are most appropriate e.g. ‘Ask everyone what they think’ is a useful rule, as is ‘Make sure you ask challenging questions’ – whereas ‘Make eye contact’ and other body language rules are unnecessary. Summarise by repeating the key rules, or reading out the Ground Rules for Exploratory Talk.

If you think it will help, choose a particular rule for the session. For example, ‘In this session it’s important that we make sure that absolutely everyone is asked to contribute, so please check that your group does that’; ‘In this session, we need to make sure we give reasons, so let’s try

to ask why, and use because to give responses’; ‘We need to go into as much detail as possible, so try to share everything you know, before negotiating a summary’.

Again, if needed, key words on display can focus thinking about good discussion, (e.g. include; discuss; question; respect; challenge; reason; elaborate; explain; negotiate).

2. SHARE ‘MAGIC MOMENTS’

Provide all the ‘magic moments’ so that everyone can see them – paper or electronic copy. Ask a participant to read one out, then without comment, continue taking turns to read until all ‘magic moments’ have been shared aloud.

Tell (and perhaps display for) participants your overall aim, for example:

“We are going to use discussion to suggest implications of the ‘magic moments’ for our practice.”

3. DISCUSS IDEAS IN GROUPS

Ask each group to choose one of the magic moments to discuss (or allocate one per group). Using the shared Ground Rules for Talk, ask the group to discuss their response to the content of the ‘magic

moment’. Make sure no pens, paper. Etc. are used! The group’s shared memory will record the talk. Set a time limit. If needed, display these prompts:

Our Response to Magic Moments

- ‘Magic moments’ are very rare.
- I have never experienced anything like the ‘magic moments’ we have heard.
- Some of the ‘magic moments’ worry me because...
- Our ‘magic moment’ has some problematic aspects.
- It is difficult trying to create the contexts for ‘magic moments’ to happen.
- ‘Magic moments’ are the icing on the cake; life is necessarily much more ordinary for both carers and clients.
- We can say what might create ‘magic moments’ in our own workplace.
- A summary of our discussion in two sentences would be...

30 seconds before time is up, let the groups know, and ask groups to spend this final half a minute choosing a spokesperson and making sure that this person knows what they are going to say on behalf of their colleagues.



RE1 CONTINUED...

4. SHARE THE IDEAS OF THE GROUPS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

Ask the first group to read their 'magic moment' and then share their summary. The whole group can then ask questions, comment and discuss the issues. However, it's important that all groups are heard, so keep an eye on the time. Make sure all groups have chance to give their feedback.

Finally ask the whole group what they believe are practical outcomes from their talk. These can be noted down, with group names, so that reference to group discussion can be called on later if necessary. Refer to your original aim and establish what you have achieved together.

5. OPTIONAL – TALK ABOUT TALK

If this is part of a process to enable more and better discussion, ask the group to comment on the quality of their group talk, and how it influenced their thinking; some questions might be,

- Who said something that you found interesting or thought provoking?
- Do you think everyone got to contribute, and if not, what can we do differently?
- What was a positive aspect of the discussion groups, for you?
- Did talking about talk help your group to work well?

6. AFTER THE SESSION

- Establish a bank of practical suggestions from the discussions.
- Use the group to help support implementation, and ask for problem solving suggestions as ideas are put in to practice.
- Let the group know the difference their ideas have made.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE 2

'Magic Moments' and Positive Risk-Taking by Steve Morgan

Reading through the 'magic moments' outlined in this booklet reminds me that we are all a collection of our past joys, experiences and even challenges.

They represent our way of searching for personal connection, meaning and identity. Each and every one of us is an individual and so are our magic moments; deeply personal experiences that bring a tear to the eye of the beholder and of anyone else that witnesses or reads about them.

A consistent theme is that the little things mean so much, because of the personal meaning they hold for us:

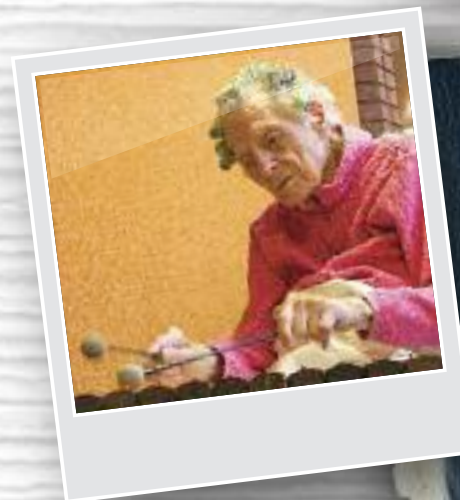
- Happy summer holidays remembered through recreating a beach.
- The presence of particular animals trigger thoughts of childhood or working on a farm.
- Cuddling a doll brings back experiences of motherhood, or just that warm feeling of connection.
- The power of moments spent dancing, completing a puzzle together, discussing current affairs in the newspaper, celebrating cultural differences, taking a walk, visiting a café, all help to restore a sense of who we are through who we have been.

- Visits to the local pub or the shops provide a pivotal point to the week.
- Using technology need not be just for the young, with a little help images and stories from our past become more easily accessible.

Then there are the bigger challenges and achievements:

- Revisiting past experiences through speaking at a conference.
- Writing a children's book out of our own experiences.
- Getting lost and finding your way back in a camper van across Europe.

In all of these examples a consistent message is that someone took a risk in order for the 'magic moments' to emerge. Positive risk-taking, in this context, is all about creating the experiences that produce that tear of joy, the passing smile, the kind word, a tiny act, a bold action, a big achievement, or a rekindled wish. Taking a risk is so important in all of our lives, so the question is how we can go about doing it with others who may be more vulnerable for reasons of health and personal circumstances. Often we ask ourselves and others "what is the risk of doing something?" In positive risk-taking we have to ask a different question, i.e. "what is the risk of NOT doing something?"



RE2 CONTINUED...



Regulation, inspection, guidelines and protocols have a place, but that place is more commonly concerned with organizing and managing services. In the case of 'magic moments', if any attempt is made to over-analyse the moment the magic will be lost... you can't care plan for them to happen!

So we need something very different if we are to create the conditions for magic to happen. We need to adopt a 'glass half full' approach, by asking *"What is it we can do and how can we make it happen?"* Just identifying the difficulties and how we should stop them simply doesn't work. The most important skills are those of every day courtesy and common sense, combined with a few 'magic moment' type of questions.

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

- It's about our personal histories, so gently enquire about the past.
- Listening to people.
- Focus on them rather than make assumptions about them.
- Use the person's own language, not the jargon of services.
- What does risk and taking a risk mean for them?
- Being observant in order to see the smallest of reactions to personal reflections and experiences.

- Taking action to support the moment to become a reality (or considering the rare occasion when it is a risk too far).

Thinking about 'magic moments' in your own life and how to create them for others:

- Reflecting on your experience of 'magic moments' in your own life.
- What did you used to do?
- What did you enjoy the most?
- Where did you live?
- Who have you met and known?
- What was the smallest thing that gave you the most pleasure?
- What risks were associated with your own 'magic moments' and were they worth taking?

Creating 'magic moments' for others:

- What is the potential 'magic moment'?
- Why will it be so positive for the individual?
- How can we make it happen?
- Who needs to be involved in making the decision?
- Who else needs to be informed?
- Who needs to do what?
- How will we know when it happens?
- When will we know it is too risky?
- What will we do to stop this activity if and when it is becoming too risky?

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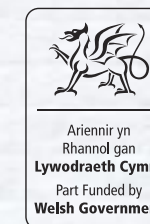
The photographs have been reproduced with the kind permission of Cathy Greenblat. They are taken from her inspirational book **'Love Loss and Laughter: Seeing Alzheimer's Differently'**. These photographs resonate with and complement the 'magic moment' stories from Wales. Cathy's blog can be found at: lovelossandlaughterbook.blogspot.co.uk/

The photograph which includes a quilt was taken by Cheryl Beer in a care home in Carmarthenshire and is reproduced with the permission of Cheryl and the individual people in the photograph.

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MAGIC MOMENTS...

Magic moments
When two hearts are carin'
Magic moments
Memories we've been sharin'

I'll never forget the smell of the hay
I've kept it in my room
The feel of the lambs brought back memories
While visiting my farm

The caravan in the garden brought back memories
And posting of postcards
The gentleman's room with beer at the bar
And making our home brew

The happy cafe's with coffee and tea's
For all of our fam'lies
The gard'ning and games and visiting pets
And dancing and sing alongs



The man in the Navy who wouldn't eat meals
So we got him a special plate
The man with the car who went for a spin
And was smelling the leather

Magic moments
Memories we've been sharin'
Magic moments
When two hearts are carin'

Time can't erase the memory
Of these Magic Moments
Filled with Love!

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