

Therapy and approaches for memory loss support

There are a number of different approaches, including therapy, that can support a person with dementia to cope with memory loss. These approaches can help with feelings and wellbeing.

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Supporting a person with memory loss

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There are a number of different approaches that can help people with dementia cope with [memory loss](#) and the feelings it can cause.

Some of these techniques may require the help of professionals, such as nurses, counsellors or therapists, but they can also be useful for family carers.

These approaches can help to improve quality of life for the person with dementia.

Approaches for memory loss support

Life story and reminiscence work

Life story work involves the person with dementia making a personal record of important experiences, people and places in their life. They can do this with the help of someone else, such as a family member or care professional.

Their personal record can take the form of a book, photo album or something they create digitally – for example, through a tablet or smartphone app. Reminiscence work is similar to life story work.

It involves encouraging a person with dementia to talk about a period, event or subject from their past. It can be done in groups or on a one-to-one basis. The person can try reminiscence work with a professional, friend or family member.

Reminiscence is often done using prompts such as music, objects and photos, which can be general or specific to the

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person. For example, if the person has always enjoyed travelling, looking at photos from places they have visited can be enjoyable to them.

Many people find life story and reminiscence work enjoyable as these approaches allow them to look back on their lives and rediscover past experiences.

They can help to maintain the person's self-esteem, confidence and sense of self. These activities can also be used as a prompt for conversation and can improve the person's social interactions with others.

They can also help professional carers understand more about the person. Life story and reminiscence work may sometimes bring back difficult or sad memories, and the person may become upset. If this happens, the person should be supported to express their feelings and to address the memory if they are comfortable doing so.

Reminiscence and reflection

We have a great range of products for people with dementia designed to support reminiscence.

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Cognitive stimulation therapy (CST)

Cognitive stimulation therapy (CST) involves activities and exercises that encourage thinking, concentration, communication and memory in the person with dementia. It involves talking about day-to-day interests, past events and memories, and information relating to the current time and place. This can be done in one-to-one sessions or in a group setting.

CST is recommended for people with mild to moderate dementia, rather than for the later stages. It is offered to people with dementia through NHS trusts and memory clinics. To find out more about CST, speak to the person's GP or memory clinic.

Cognitive rehabilitation

Cognitive rehabilitation is a type of therapy that involves the person with dementia working together with a therapist on specific skills that they would like to develop. For example, they could focus on learning a new skill, such as using a mobile phone, or rediscovering a skill that they used to enjoy, such as cooking.

This approach focuses on what is important to the person and those closest to them. It can help people with dementia to focus on the skills, abilities and knowledge that they still have. It can also help with memory and attention. To find out more about cognitive rehabilitation, speak to the person's GP or memory clinic.

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Support from the GP when you have dementia

Find out what support is available from a GP when a person has dementia, including the role of the GP in dementia care. The GP can support a person even if they don't accept their diagnosis.

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Memory aids and strategies

Find out more about devices, aids and strategies you can use to help memory.

Memory aids

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Memory loss but not dementia: functional cognitive disorder (FCD)



Information

Functional cognitive disorder causes problems with memory and thinking - symptoms that can look a lot like dementia. Although it can be challenging to get a diagnosis of FCD, the right treatment and support can help a person get better.

13 February 2025

Souvenaid: I'm worried about my memory – should I buy this drink?



Research

Our research team examined evidence on the nutritional drink Souvenaid, that was claimed to help improve some aspects of memory in people who have Alzheimer's disease.

09 January 2025

How to offer help to someone with dementia who doesn't



Advice

Do you know a person with memory problems who is helping? Here are a few ways someone who may be in contact with insight about their situation.

26 November 2024

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