

# Storytelling resource: User guide



# Who we are

**Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 and promote their rights and interests.**

**Our vision** is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

**Our mission** is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people enjoy better later lives.

**We have three strategic aims:**

 **We help older people to be as well as they can be**

 **We promote a positive view of ageing and later life**

 **We tackle loneliness and isolation**

# How we can help

**We know that growing older doesn't come with a manual. Later life can bring changes and opportunities to your life and you may need to know about rights, organisations and services which are unfamiliar to you.**

That's why we provide free information and advice to help you on a range of topics including benefits and entitlements, social care, legal issues such as Power of Attorney, housing and much more. All of our guides are available to download for free from our website, or you can contact our helpline team to have copies posted to you for free.

Our **helpline** is a free, confidential phone service for older people, their carers and families in Scotland looking for information and advice.

Later life can bring times when you just need someone to talk to. Our **friendship line** is part of our wider helpline and older people can call us for a chat. We're here to listen, provide friendship and offer support.

## For information, advice and friendship



**Call us free on:**  
**0800 12 44 222**  
**(Mon – Fri, 9am - 5pm)**



**Visit [agescotland.org.uk](https://agescotland.org.uk) to find out more.**

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# Introduction

We believe the voice of lived experience should be at the heart of decisions made about people living with dementia. As experts in their own experience, those living with dementia are best placed to understand their own needs and wants. However, it can be difficult to create the conditions to hear crucial points of view and gather expertise.

In collaboration with our partners, the Village Storytelling Centre, we - About Dementia - have created a resource which uses a storytelling approach to structure and support conversations with groups of people living with dementia. The resource will gently focus on themes related to policy, taking inspiration from evidence-based sources such as Cognitive Stimulation Therapy and the creative educational tool, Process Drama (O'Neill, 2014).

Throughout the document, URL links have been provided which will direct you to further references and information that may be of interest. These can be copied and pasted into your web browser, though you don't need to use them to run sessions successfully.

The sessions outlined in this resource can be run by anyone, though some experience of working with groups may be beneficial. Even if you have years of experience leading group work with people living with dementia, we recommend reading this document thoroughly before beginning the storytelling sessions.

We hope group members will have a positive response to the material, potentially gaining new perspectives or experiencing catharsis<sup>1</sup>. However, it is important to note the sessions are not therapy or lessons - instead they are a way to support engaging conversation and gather opinions safely. We have designed the resource to support the development of new facilitation skills and consideration of old skills through a new frame. As such, we believe the sessions can be mutually beneficial for those living with dementia and for you - the group leader and facilitator. You may even gain a deeper understanding and connection with the people you work with.

Importantly, we hope that everyone involved will have fun and feel empowered to shape policy.

Finally, to help About Dementia influence policy and practice nationally, we have set up a very simple system for feedback. This means the sessions you support will have impact beyond the groupwork itself, directly improving the lives of people living with dementia and unpaid carers throughout Scotland.

So, are you sitting comfortably?

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<sup>1</sup> Philosopher Richard Kearney has explored how narrative retelling and remembering can provide cathartic release for those who have experienced trauma (Kearney, 2007). During About Dementia's Storytelling sessions with people living with dementia, we have witnessed people talk about their own diagnosis through the mechanism of providing support to the characters. Such moments have surprised regular support staff, who have never heard dementia be acknowledged by the same individuals.

# About the partners



About Dementia is Age Scotland's forum for improving lives of people living with dementia and unpaid carers. We work alongside people with lived experience of dementia to shape the policy and practice that matter to them. Collaborating with people with lived experience is at the core of what we do, as is taking a human rights approach. We believe that people living with dementia and unpaid carers are best qualified to say what is and isn't working and how to do it better. Through regular group meetings, we connect with our members to hear their views on the issues that matter most to them. The project influences change by responding to policy consultations, holding events, creating reports, and working with practitioners.

For more information, please visit

[www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/what-we-do/dementia/about-dementia/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/what-we-do/dementia/about-dementia/)



The Village Storytelling Centre (VSC) is a grassroots community arts organisation who are considered to be European leaders in Applied Storytelling - the use of story as a tool to support individuals, communities and organisations. The VSC specialises in working with marginalised people and has a great deal of experience in delivering story-led projects with a variety of groups such as young carers, people with disabilities, people in recovery and adults living with dementia. Care and creativity are central to the VSC ethos, they treat people and their real-life stories with the utmost sensitivity and work with deep consideration of the ethics of story gathering and sharing. At the Village, we believe that everyone has stories worth hearing, yet none are written in stone.

More information can be found at [www.villagestorytelling.org.uk](http://www.villagestorytelling.org.uk)

# Setting the scene - everything you need to know

## What is in this resource?

We'll start with an introduction to **Storytelling and dementia**, explaining what we mean by the term storytelling. We'll also explore the many benefits it can have in a dementia care context, particularly when used as an advocacy tool.

We'll then delve into the **Key principles and techniques** used in each session. Some of the ideas and vocabulary may be familiar to you, whilst some may be new or presented in a different way.

Next, we will explain how to understand and use the session plans, giving plenty of tips and tricks to ensure a lively and positive group session. To influence wider practice, we'll also outline the process of how to share your findings simply with About Dementia, ensuring anonymity for your group members.

We understand and respect that some people may feel sensitive around the use of the word dementia or may have forgotten their diagnosis. When facilitating, despite prior reservations from support staff, we have found that people have not reacted badly from the use of the word dementia. In fact, by using the terminology, we've found people living with dementia have independently brought up their own diagnosis, which can be cathartic. Remember, we are talking about a character who lives with dementia, and not putting any member on the spot to share about their own experience. As such, people may not make the link between the character at all, this can be an added benefit of storytelling, the ability to explore a topic at a distance.

After you have read this handy guide, you can move on to the first session plan. There are **six session plans** in total; each session includes step-by-step instructions and all the information you need to lead a 45-minute storytelling session. The sessions are aimed towards groups of people living with mid or later stage dementia. To make the session manageable, and to have the opportunity to meaningfully include everyone, we recommend limiting group size to around 10 people. Though, use your discretion as every group is different. Feel free to adapt the material as you see fit - remember the aim is to ensure that all voices, even the quiet ones, are heard.

The session topics are:

- **Policy engagement (and an introduction to About Dementia)**
- **Space, place and community**
- **Finance**
- **Hobbies and interests**
- **Care**
- **Human rights**

As Session 1 'Policy Engagement and an Introduction to About Dementia' sets the scene for the program, we recommend starting here. After you've completed Session 1, you can run the sessions in any order that interests you. The sessions adopt a gentle storytelling approach, each designed to stimulate participants, alongside creating a safe space to have meaningful conversations. If you are new to the techniques, or the idea of storytelling makes you shiver - don't fret! We have carefully built storytelling into the session plans themselves in the form of letters from invented characters, each character reaching out to the group for advice. You can add as much or as little theatricality as you feel comfortable with - feather boas are optional!

At the end of each session is a simple but important **feedback process**. You will be prompted as the facilitator to use a smartphone or tablet to take photographs of some of the information created through the exercises. You won't be asked to take photos of people, instead the photos will capture any thoughts shared and noted by the group. By snapping a few photos, you can quickly capture the outcomes of the conversations, sending them directly to About Dementia via the dedicated email address: **aboutdementia@agescotland.org.uk**.

The crucial opinions shared will help inform a wider understanding of the experience of dementia and the needs of people living with the condition. Using a novel approach, this resource aims to involve people living with more advanced dementia, a group seldom heard in shaping policy in Scotland.

To accompany each session, you'll find materials in clearly marked envelopes, one for each of the corresponding sessions. In some cases, you will be asked to source a few materials, though we have tried to keep it simple.

## Let's begin!



## Storytelling and dementia

Storytelling is the communication of a real or imagined narrative to one or more people. It's something we all do every day, and we are very, very good at it. In fact, many anthropologists and scientists strongly believe that storytelling is central to human existence. From the time we lived in caves, humans have evolved by using stories to learn, connect and build. We are who we are, because of stories and we are specifically wired-up to use stories! The experience of stories doesn't change with the development of dementia, in fact tapping into this innate tool can be an incredibly powerful way to connect, support and advocate for and with people living with the condition.

There are particular strengths to highlight in the context of storytelling in dementia care:

1

**We've found working with storytelling takes the pressure off recall of fact, getting things 'right' or 'true'. Story is communication involving imagination and flexible thought. This can be a relief to people with impaired cognition, as there is no 'wrong' answer.**

2

**As storytelling does not have to be based on 'truth', it can be used to convey feelings in an indirect and protected way. It offers distance and objectivity that can help us to safely speak about subjects which may be too difficult to address personally.**

3

**Hearing and sharing stories can offer a moment of great comfort and human connection, they can also be wonderfully fun! Even if the narrative is not always understood, the quality of the interaction speaks loudly to participants. The interaction reassures them that what they have to say is valuable and they are worthy of being seen and heard.**

In this resource we will focus on **personal stories**.

Personal stories can be a powerful autobiographical testimony, amplified through microphones on a beautifully lit stage. However, as you will know, stories can also be shared during day-to-day conversation. It's often the short anecdotes over a cup of tea, or chit chats at the bus stop, which reveal most about how we feel.

In any circumstances, having the space in which to share and hear personal stories, in a non-judgmental way, is important and empowering. In storytelling sessions, the message should be clear to your group members - you deserve to be listened to and what you have to say is valuable.

Through the process of sharing and reflecting, participants often find that stories they thought were fixed truths are not set in stone. We can sensitively observe the stories we have been told or tell ourselves, considering which ones serve us and which may not. We can gain skills in imagination, creation, expression and take ownership of our stories. Importantly, in the context of influencing change, storytelling can help us to consider the options 'for what happens next'.

Alongside personal stories, we will draw from another storytelling approach we call **One-Step-Removed**. This involves the use of fictional stories which feel real and should therefore resonate with the group and their life experiences. To prompt discussion in this resource, we have created stories about fictional characters who live with dementia, or care and work with people who live with dementia.

Whilst the characters are fictional, the scenarios they encounter are based on real challenges that people living with dementia and unpaid carers have shared during About Dementia meetings. As the challenges mirror the real-life issues people living with dementia experience, we hope the solutions created within sessions may provide a valuable base in which to influence change.

As noted, the One-Step Removed approach offers the distance and objectivity necessary for a group to consider issues which directly affect them, without it feeling too personal. It allows participants to regulate their level of personal disclosure, as they are free to share as much of their own story as feels comfortable for them. Whilst the One-Step-Removed approach has the benefit of not 'putting people on the spot', you may be surprised by how many participants do disclose personal details or make links to their own circumstances. A particular focus is given to finding solutions and positive futures for the characters the group will meet. For some, it can be easier to first think of a positive future for a made-up character or friend, before making the link to ourselves.



**"The story you'd created included some distressing circumstances; but your problem-solving approach helped participants to feel we'd contributed to a positive attempt at tackling these difficult situations"**

Feedback from previous About Dementia Storytelling engagement with people living with dementia

Beyond narrative content, the experience of hearing and sharing stories can offer a moment of deep connection, pleasure and fellowship, which for an isolated or distressed person, could be deeply felt and even transformative. Adrenaline levels decrease and the message is communicated, that we are together, connecting, imagining. We are safe.

This resource has drawn from 3 inspirational ways of working,

### 1. Storytelling

### 2. Process Drama - the role of the expert

### 3. Cognitive Stimulation Therapy

In this user guide you will find a summary of these approaches, alongside the key principles and techniques involved. Some of the ideas may be familiar to you, though they may require some fresh consideration.

We have added **quick takeaways** for some of the key principles.

# Key principles and techniques

## Storytelling

This resource uses storytelling, but fear not, this version of storytelling doesn't involve monsters, silly voices or the facilitator having to memorise anything! Instead, the storytelling is built into the session plan, through characters who reach out for support and advice on relevant topics. By doing so, we can talk about challenges which may or may not be directly affecting our participants without putting too much pressure on them. Participants are then able to regulate how much they would like to share.

The activities have been designed so that group members are likely to relate the character's story to their own experiences. If this ever gets too personal or the conversation appears to be deeper than you can support at that moment, bring the focus back to the story and the task of offering the character advice.

Similarly, if time is marching on, you can use the story to move the session forward. The story structure can also provide closure, as we have an innate human desire for stories to have a beginning, middle and end. This allows the session to find a sense of resolution and satisfaction - even if you have been talking about a situation that could be much harder to resolve in reality.

## Quick takeaways

- 1** Storytelling is built into each session plan in the resource - no need to memorise anything!
- 2** Group members will give advice to fictional characters about relatable situations.
- 3** Storytelling offers distance and objectivity. It can be a non-confrontational, safe and simple way to explore difficult subjects. If there is any distress, you can always bring the focus back to the story.

## Speaking with conviction

Within each session plan are prompts where we will suggest you speak the group's words back to them 'with conviction'. Speaking with purpose gives value and weight to the opinion shared by the group member.

To speak with conviction, we recommend you...

- Allow your body to take up space - pull your shoulders back, sit up straight or even stand
- Look up at the group, make eye contact warmly and confidently
- Try not to speak until everyone in the space is settled and you have their attention
- Take a deep breath before you begin
- Speak clearly, purposefully and directly to the group in front of you
- When you speak, pay attention to your pace - slow down for gravitas or speed up for intensity
- In other words - tell a story!

This could feel odd and exposing at first, but switching from informal chat to purposeful delivery is very important. It can be an incredibly powerful thing to hear your own words elevated and reflected back to you with the dignity and space they deserve.

You can watch the example from our friends, The Life Changes Trust, who asked carers and people living with dementia what the word care means to them. In this film, by speaking other people's words, the answers become powerful and poetic testimonials. The video is available at [bit.ly/LCT-video](https://bit.ly/LCT-video).

## Quick takeaways

- 1** The more purpose and conviction we give to the words we speak, the more meaning can be taken from them.
- 2** For a group member, hearing their words spoken can be a transformative experience, as they understand they have been heard and their opinions matter.
- 3** It can feel odd but be brave - give the words and the group members the importance they deserve.

## Allow for deeper meanings

Often there are many layers of meaning within a story. Indeed, each person that tells or hears a story, filters it through their own unique life experiences, arriving at their own interpretation. We may not initially understand the thought process behind our participants' anecdotes and stories, however there is meaning there. Even if the contribution from a participant doesn't seem to make sense to us - it made sense to the person in the moment and so it is valid.

We may also find that certain responses make clearer sense when seen in a wider context of feedback from other groups. Individual comments may appear to be outliers or obscure, but if several participants from different groups mention the same theme - there could be an underlying factor requiring attention. It's important not to feel pressure to interpret or filter the feedback shared with About Dementia, or create a beautiful story that makes perfect sense - this can be very tempting as humans have a deep desire to find satisfying endings.

## Beginnings, middles and endings

Bringing a sense of closure and resolution to the session is important, particularly if the group have become invested in the characters, or if they have contributed personal stories.

Physical cues for signalling the end of the session could involve:

- Group leaders purposefully closing the resource book
- Covering the objects from the activities with a tablecloth
- Sealing the envelope containing the postcards written during the session

You could also explore grounding exercises by simply taking a couple of deep breaths together, focusing on the exhale. All of the above actions are a clear signal to the group that the session has come to a close.

Once you have brought the session to an end, change the tone in your voice. Remember to thank the group for participating. You could reassure them about the success of the conversation and the valuable insights you found together. This could be comforting if there were opposing views or moments of vulnerability.

By closing the role-play and session appropriately, any frustration, disagreement or feelings of vulnerability can stay within the session. This will help to avoid emotions spilling over to the rest of the day. Although, we hope the only lingering feelings after the session will be of accomplishment, increased self-worth and connection to others.

## Quick takeaways

- 1** Clearly defining the beginning and the end of each session helps to build a sense of resolution, accomplishment and connection.
- 2** Marking the close appropriately can stop emotions from the session spilling out into the rest of the day.
- 3** All stories need a good ending!



image from previous engagement work

## Process Drama

### Mantle of the expert

“Nothing about us, without us” is a common expression used in the disability movement. After all, who knows more about the solutions to challenges than those who face them. As such, during each of the sessions in this resource, participants are firmly positioned as the experts on the themes explored. Fictional characters will reach out to the group for advice on issues they are having, related to key policy areas.

The message relayed during sessions is:

- **You are the authority of your own experience and you will be heard.**
- **Your opinion is valid and valuable, as are you.**

We know this is not a message that many people living with dementia receive from their environment, society or policy. To enable people living with dementia, it is our role to communicate this message clearly, explicitly and reaffirm throughout the process.

This approach is developed from the work of drama educator **Dorothy Heathcote**. Her playful and empowering technique of inviting participants to assume various expert roles within a story is usually delivered with children. However, we hope you will agree that it has tremendous potential for use with people of all ages. You can read more about her at [www.mantleoftheexpert.com/what-is-moe/dorothy-heathcote](http://www.mantleoftheexpert.com/what-is-moe/dorothy-heathcote).

## Quick takeaways

- 1 Participants are firmly positioned as the experts of their own experience.**
- 2 As the people who face similar challenges, participants will draw on their own experiences to give advice to fictional characters.**
- 3 Throughout the sessions, everyone should feel that their opinions are valuable.**

## Person-centred

A person-centred approach places the participant as central importance. As an individual, they get to decide the direction of the activities and conversations. The facilitator’s role is as a supportive guide rather than leader.

Today, the person-centred approach is considered best practice in education, community and care sectors. The concept originated from the therapist **Carl Rogers**, who believed that in order for psychological healing to occur, certain conditions had to be present in the relationship between the therapist and the person in therapy. The conditions being empathy, unconditional positive regard, and harmony.

In this resource we encourage the facilitator to stimulate conversation, without leading the direction. To listen to and accept the group’s answers without judgement. This can sound easy, but in practice can be harder to do. We often have to un-learn the habits and traits we have built; this can take time - be gentle with yourself. The session plans provide specific themes, stories and questions, though it’s important to keep in mind that we don’t expect specific answers - there’s no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ opinion. The direction and content of conversations should be determined by the group as far as possible.

## Quick takeaways

- 1 The participants’ wants and needs are of the highest importance.**
- 2 The environment is one of acceptance without Judgement.**
- 3 The facilitator is a supportive guide and offers inspiration.**
- 4 We don’t expect specific answers. We’re trying to build up a picture of how people feel throughout Scotland, it’s okay if answers don’t correlate with each other.**



## Role-play

The approach we will be using - The mantle of the expert (see page 12) - is, in a sense, role-play. But don't worry, you or the participants won't be forced to act scenes! Instead, we are asking the groups to invest in a fictional situation and characters, treating them with as much care and attention as if they are real.

The aim of the resource is not to mislead the groups. At the start of each session, be upfront and relay that the characters and their stories are fictional, but based on real people and situations. Once the group has been told or reminded of this, it is important that as a facilitator, you handle the characters and the situations as if they are real and genuinely in need of support.

Although there is no need for overdramatisation, you are stepping into a role-play, so lead the way! Your conviction and emotional investment in the situation will enable the group to similarly empathise with the characters and offer their genuine advice.



## Cognitive Stimulation Therapy

Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) is increasingly being used as an intervention to help those living with dementia. CST sessions incorporate a range of group interactive activities. These activities are designed to promote and encourage thinking, concentration, memory, and social interaction. The structure of each of the sessions in the pack take inspiration from CST as sessions start off with a warm-up activity, orientation, creating a group name and deciding on a song that captures the groups' identity. Find out more about Cognitive Stimulation Therapy by visiting [bit.ly/CST-Evidence-Document](https://bit.ly/CST-Evidence-Document)

### Orientation

Orientation is the process of introducing or reintroducing participants to the context in which the session is taking place e.g., the time of year and location. It is a gentle process, which aims to minimise distress. During orientation, the facilitator avoids asking direct questions or putting participants on the spot. For example, instead of asking for the date, consider asking if the group has seen any spring flowers yet, or if they are looking forward to some winter snow. Ensure the date is pre-written on a flipchart and can be referenced throughout. Gentle orientation is key to building participants' confidence in the process.

### Consistency

In formal Cognitive Stimulation Therapy, each session is set up and run in a similar way. This involves the group meeting at the same time, in the same location, with the same group of people partaking in a similar format of activities. Particular focus is given to establishing a routine in the beginning and end of the sessions. Whilst we understand you may be limited in how consistently you can deliver each session; we would recommend you aim to stick to the principles above. Consistency is a key goal in caregiving and activity leading for people with dementia, as it can help with recollection. Keeping consistent can also create a sense of familiarity, which can ease feelings of distress, confusion, and frustration.



## Sensory stimulation

Storytelling is an oral activity, but throughout the 6 sessions we recommend activation of all of the senses. Sensory stimulation can offer participants another entry point to the themes being explored. It can activate deeper thinking, create connections and spark memories, whilst grounding the individual in the current moment.

To enable sensory stimulation, each session is supported by postcards featuring clear images of the characters in our stories. During the playful warm-up activities, participants will be encouraged to use, sight, smell, touch and sound. If you already offer tea and cake to your members, we recommend incorporating this into sessions to encourage sensory and social stimulation. To acknowledge the lack of time available in busy settings and to allow for easier preparation, we have aimed to reduce the number of materials required. However, you will know the group you support best, so feel free to get creative and source scented or tactile objects to use.

## Quick takeaways

- 1** Sensory stimulation can support cognition, create links, ground the individual and spark memories - it can be very powerful!
- 2** We have suggested moments to engage senses throughout the sessions. Alongside suggestions of extra materials you may wish to source.
- 3** Feel free to use your creativity to explore additional sensory cues.

## Strengths-based and equal praise

The idea of a strengths-based approach was forwarded by North American social worker and civil rights activists, Bertha Reynolds in the 1990s. It promotes a focus on individuals' strengths rather than what they lack. A strengths-based practice considers the whole person, their life experience, resilience, and abilities. In addition, it takes into account the person's context within social and community networks.

By using this approach, we aim to move the focus away from dementia and its associated challenges, and place the focus firmly on the individual, their unique skills, personalities, interests, and strengths.

It is important to encourage everyone in the group with positivity and absolute acceptance. When participants sense genuine pleasure and praise, they will find more joy and deeper engagement in the session. However, it is key to ensure that feedback is equal. For example, if a participant offers a response which you think is particularly insightful, you could be tempted to say "that is the best answer I've heard all day!". Although this comment is well-intentioned, it may position a contribution as separate and superior to others - which could inadvertently feel hurtful to quieter members.

## Quick takeaways

- 1** A strength-based approach focuses on the whole person, who is a full individual with a wealth of life experiences and skills.
- 2** Rather than concentrating on areas of deficit, the approach works with the abilities and capabilities people do have.
- 3** It promotes positivity and acceptance by praising people equally.

# How to use the session plans

Sessions are designed to be delivered to a group of up to 10 participants. Smaller groups of around 5 will be easier to manage for the facilitator and will allow for a deeper engagement with the group. However, we've kept the numbers flexible to meet your own circumstances.

We recommend the sessions are held in a comfortable, quiet space with minimal distractions. Although, we understand a private room may not be available to you. If not, try to shield the group from distraction by using screens, or separating the group into an enclosed area of the room.

Each of the session plans include:

- A beginning:
  - ~ An Introduction, which is the same for each session
  - ~ A choice of adaptable warm-up activities, allowing the facilitator to choose which would best suit the group
- A middle:
  - ~ A main activity introduced by a letter from a character
- An ending:
  - ~ A reflection and simple closing activity, saying goodbye to the character

Each exercise has a suggested length of time which can be adapted according to how engaged or interested your group are. The sessions are designed to appeal to people with varying experiences of dementia, including those living with more advanced dementia.



image from previous engagement work

As those working in care and support roles will well know, we are all individuals with different likes, dislikes, interests and abilities. From our experience, not everyone may engage with the session at first. However, what may not appeal to someone one day may pique their interest on another occasion - it's important to keep an open mind and not to assume capability.

It may be that you start with a larger group and after encouragement, you note that some people do not appear to be engaging with the sessions - that's okay. You can continue with the smaller engaged group for the remainder of the sessions. However, from our own experience of running engagement sessions in the past, sometimes those who do not initially appear to be engaged still surprise us and come out with some insightful contributions later in the session. As the saying goes, if you don't try - you never know!

Where possible, we have offered a choice of activities or variations, allowing you to adapt the session plan to best cater to the interests of your group. Before the session, take the time to read through each and choose the activity which would best suit your group. To keep sessions under an hour, increasing attention span, we recommend running only one warm up activity.

Each session will require a few specific materials, all of which will be listed at the beginning of that session's plan. Most materials should be provided in the session packs; however, the facilitator may be asked to source some simple and easy to find items.

## Orientation

In Session 1, time is taken to set up an orientation routine. To help bond the group, members will choose a name or motto, and a group song. You'll then confirm the time, date and goal of the session. The orientation routine will be returned to at the start of all following sessions.

## Reflection

At the end of each session, the group will be invited to take part in a simple reflection activity which will give everyone the opportunity to share their thoughts on the session. Allocating time for these activities is important as it can help to re-energise the group after discussing challenging topics, it can help to provide closure and can also help to identify if there are any aspects of the session which could be improved (Northwest Service Academy, 2013).

## Feedback

One of the main purposes of this resource is to gather feedback from your group about issues that may be affecting their lives. We have designed this feedback process to be anonymous for the participants and as time-efficient for you as possible. We hope it should take no more than 5 minutes to complete feedback after each session. All session plans will direct you as to when to take photos and what the focus should be. After each session, the images can be sent directly to the dedicated email address [aboutdementia@agescotland.org.uk](mailto:aboutdementia@agescotland.org.uk). Please ensure the Session theme, location and name of your group is included in your email.

If there are any standout quotes or opinions, feel free to include them in the body of the email. To capture the depth of the conversation, it could be useful to have an assistant facilitator or volunteer to help with note taking - though this is not essential.

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## How you can help

### Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

All the information we provide is free and impartial. It helps older people access their rights and entitlements and can be life changing.

We are also a lifeline for older people who are feeling lonely and isolated. You can help us to support older people who need us most. Together, we can make a difference.



#### Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

- Call **03330 15 14 60**
- Visit **age.scot/donate**
- Text **AGESCOTGIVE** to **70085** to donate £5\*
- Complete the **donation form** and return by Freepost



#### Fundraise

Whether it's having a bake sale or running a marathon, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/fundraise**.



#### Leave us a gift in your Will

By choosing to leave us a gift in your Will, you can help us to continue being there for older people in the years to come. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/legacy**.

\*Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message

# About Dementia storytelling resources

## User guide

1: Policy engagement (and an introduction to About Dementia)

2: Space, place and community

3: Finance

4: Hobbies and interests

5: Care

6: Human rights



To find out more about what we do: [www.agescotland.org.uk/AboutDementia](http://www.agescotland.org.uk/AboutDementia)

Contact us at: [AboutDementia@agescotland.org.uk](mailto:AboutDementia@agescotland.org.uk)

Tweet us at: [@AboutDementiaSc](https://twitter.com/AboutDementiaSc)



**Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.**

**Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.**

### Contact us:

**Head office**  
0333 323 2400

**Age Scotland helpline**  
0800 12 44 222

**e:** [info@agescotland.org.uk](mailto:info@agescotland.org.uk)  
**www:** [www.agescotland.org.uk](http://www.agescotland.org.uk)



### Sign up to our newsletter

Our regular newsletters by email contain details of our campaigns, services and how you can support our work. Sign up today at [age.scot/roundup](http://age.scot/roundup)



### Follow us on social media

Our social media channels are a great way to keep up to date with our work and issues that affect older people.