

LIFE STORY

If you're at home caring for a person living with dementia, it is likely you are experiencing less social contact as a result of the measures taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

But it's really important to keep you and the person you're caring for as physically and mentally active as you possibly can while at home.

We have prepared a collection of resources which you might find helpful during these times of uncertainty.

We hope that you find the resources we've listed useful. We have no affiliation with any of the providers/organisations and we apologise for any omissions.

Dementia Services Information and
Development Centre
March 2020



DSiDC

Dementia Services Information
and Development Centre

LIFE STORY

While we are all maintaining safe social distance and spending more time at home, it could be a great time to start writing or putting together a life story which might become an invaluable resource in the future.

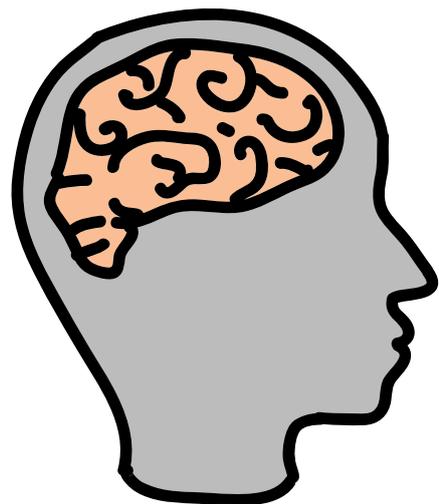
Why a life story?

One of the effects of dementia is that it reduces the ability of a person to remember events or to have a conversation in the manner they were able to do before.

A life story is a record of the information of the life and events of a person.

Life stories can be great conversation starters about topics that are meaningful to the person. These stories can be recorded in lots of different formats, some of which we have listed below, and can be easily shared with family and care partners.

A life story never finishes - keep adding stories as life goes on.



Remember! Do not only record facts but also feelings. For example, knowing that someone has brothers and sisters is useful, but you need to know if they have a close relationship or not. Otherwise bringing them up in conversation may have an adverse effect on the mood and connection.

Formats:

Book format - This can be easily accessible to carers and visitors. Keep it simple with photos and clear, easy-to-read text. You can protect it in a plastic sleeve or laminate it. A ring binder is helpful to keep adding pages.

Collage format – Images are very powerful, and can be useful for people with a more advanced dementia. Remember to use a contrasting background and not to visually overload the space too much.

Video format – Collect small videos including family films, messages from the person with dementia to the family and vice-versa. Short videos about the person's place of origin or relevant times they lived through can be helpful too.



Memory box - A box with physical contents can add shape and texture to memories. A teddy, a ring, a letter, a keyring, a business card, any items with sentimental value will be very useful in a memory box.

Apps/ technology - The Social Care Institute of Excellence has detailed advice on creating a life story with technology in the following website.

<https://tinyurl.com/us7bpk5>

Personal profile documents - A one page version of a life story can be very useful for a hospital admission. It will help staff to get to know the person a little better and to provide good person centred care.

Here is a template for a life story from Dementia UK.

<https://tinyurl.com/t4zo9vb>

You can also check the booklet "This is me" from Alzheimers.org.uk

<https://tinyurl.com/yyw3fcf3>

