

An apprentice's evaluation of the RYCTT scheme

By Polly Williams

"I found the RYCT training course really valuable. I had already been working with a group of people with dementia and the course added greatly to my knowledge of dementia, both in terms of the information given and because we did group exercises that gave us the opportunity to experience things like not being heard, taking a long time to say things and then no-one listening and people talking over you and about you as if you weren't there. It also gave me more knowledge of how to use a range of creative activities in reminiscence work such as drawing, song, drama, improvisation and mime. The structure of the training echoes the structure of the RYCT project which was useful as it really reinforced the way it works and the way it takes participants through various life stages. Most of all it was really good fun and I met a group of lovely, like-minded people."

"The apprenticeship has made me feel that I actually could be a reminiscence practitioner - which is what I want to be - and given me the confidence to think that I could run my own sessions. It hasn't been easy and I've had to think hard and make changes to the way that I work based on all the feedback that I've been given. I have confidence in the RYCT technique because it is based on long-established, and tried and trusted methods, and having gone through the sequence of sessions, I can see how it really works. The participants all obviously enjoy coming and joining in and it is great to see relationships between people in similar situations develop. I have found it a privilege to hear the many fascinating stories that the people with dementia and their carers tell about their pasts. The idea that has particularly stuck with me is that we want people to feel that they are at a party. You might have dementia but you can still enjoy yourself, socialise and feel valued for who you are and what you've done. The point is not to 'improve' your memory in some way or try and get you back to some earlier version of yourself, but to get what you can out of the present and for people to see you and value you as you are right now."