Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today (RYCT) & Remembering Together (RTRT)

Reminiscence in Dementia Care
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Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today

Reminiscing with people with dementia and their family carers: a project created by the European Reminiscence Network, refined and developed over 16 years by many others.
Origins of the project 1997

- International Conference on the potential value of Reminiscence in Dementia Care
- Acknowledging European dimensions of the problem
- Recognising the reality that families do, and will continue to do most of the caring
- Responding to need to support family carers
- Value of reminiscence training for carers to help them continue caring at home
1997 “Widening Horizons in Dementia Care”: a London conference with 250 delegates from 6 continents organised by ERN
A Pilot EU Health Promotion Project

- Austria
- Belgium
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Sweden
- U.K.

Pilot RYCT Projects 1997-9
We find partners for the new ERN pilot action research project supported by EU Health Promotion Unit

Ove Dahl working in Denmark, Lise Naess in Norway, Errollyn Bruce UK
• Angelika Trilling in Germany, Viveca Hagmark in Finland & Lotta Isacs in Sweden
The new RYCT team train together in London
The RYCT project runs in 11 countries

The Belgian group take over an apartment in Brussels and furnish it for the project with reminiscence items to stimulate memories.
RYCT in Netherlands and, later on, Spain

- A shared programme with local differences and adaptations
- New countries join as project progresses
Reminiscence Life Course Themes

- Childhood
- Neighbourhood
- Schooldays
- Starting working life
- Going out & looking good
- Courting days
- Marriage & settling down
- The next generation

- Optional additional themes tried:
  - Grandparents
  - War Years
  - Holidays
  - Special celebrations
  - Shopping in the past
  - Favourite recipes
  - Gardening
  - Hobbies
  - Cinema & entertainment
  - Journeys to remember
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<th>Some examples of successful creative reminiscence methods</th>
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Pat plays her own mother and Caroline plays Pat as a child
• There is scope for humour & creativity in acting “as if” the event is happening.

• Using reminiscence objects as props helps the scene come to life.

• It gives people with little or no speech, constructive actions to perform, which contribute to the combined effort of the group.
• Whole group situations fun to join in and there are parts for everyone.

• The subject of weddings is very important because it often helps reinforce central relationships today in the present
Handling familiar objects from the past

- Handling the tools of a life’s work helps people to recall and show past competence and skill. The body remembers!!

- Talking is only one way of communicating

• Handling the tools of a life’s work helps people to recall and show past competence and skill. The body remembers!!
Edith (aged 92) enjoys the familiar feel of the old typewriter and remembers how to work it.
Gertie (aged 93) sees a blow-up photo of her family at the sea-side in the 1930s. She recognises all of them from their legs!
• When presented with a blow-up photo of his wedding day, Dennis remembers his wedding tie and much that happened on the occasion.

• His wife cannot believe this, as he has not given her any indication that he remembers any of it.
Music and dancing

- Dance gives hand and eye contact, familiar rhythms and remembered steps. If the music is of ‘the right period’ for the person and feels familiar, many memories will be stimulated which can be shared in the group.
Singing familiar songs together

- Tunes and even words are often retained, even when speech goes, and old songs evoke many memories.

- Singing together helps the group to feel a sense of belonging.
Gertie gathers her thoughts while Pat writes down what she has remembered.
Some people draw more easily than they speak, especially with someone beside them showing interest and asking questions.
Memory Boxes or Life Portraits

A quiet reflective individual process with a facilitator. A chance to consider what is important and to find a way to shape and share it.
Memory Boxes celebrate difference and the uniqueness of the individual: an important aspect of reminiscence work
• Practical activities like baking, and gardening are enjoyable normalising activities which absorb the people, engage their full attention and allow easy contact and communication.
How did family carers react?

- Family carers enjoyed reminiscing themselves in the carers’ group and reported less stress.
- Most were able to use reminiscence to stimulate their relative and to enhance communication.
- They contributed their knowledge of the relative’s life history and interests.
- By revisiting their joint past, many family carers re-bonded with the person they are now caring for.
- Family carers gained support and learned from us and from one another new ways of coping.
How did the people with dementia react?

- Speech often reappeared when long-term memory was stimulated and pressure was withdrawn.
- There was pleasurable recognition of familiar situations, songs, actions and objects, even when speech was absent.
- There was a high level of participation and engagement.
- Positive emotional responses and greater social confidence emerged; a definite sense of belonging.
- A lost sense of humour often resurfaced.
- Attendance was high throughout the project.
Putting carers and carees together

- We supplied a safe, sociable and accepting place for them to be together
- We reduced social isolation of the couple
- Couples made new friendships and met outside the groups
- We emphasised what the caree did and can still do
- We revisited and acknowledged their shared past
- Carers and carees had fun together in a relaxed atmosphere
A manual of best practice from across all European RYCT projects, published 1999, now translated into six languages.
German and Italian translations
Danish, Dutch, Spanish & Catalan editions have also been produced.
Remembering Together 2010-2012

Remembering Together: Reminiscence Training for families living with dementia: a reminiscence project across 10 EU countries with support from Grundtvig under the Lifelong Learning Programme
Based on the Best Practice Manual for RYCT and RTRT groups

Manual by Pam Schweitzer & Errollyn Bruce: Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today: Reminiscence in Dementia Care: a guide to good practice
Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2008
Additional priority: using creative arts in each RTRT project

Asian Elders in London try reminiscence drama
The London Asian group work together using their creative arts and craft skills
to create a wall-hanging for their centre
Featuring memories and life stories

Hello, it's Prem speaking.
Born in South Africa, beautiful place.
So sunny, full of flowers, God nature's bliss.
Loved my husband, he was a photographer.
So many memories, we are very happy together.
Cooking, enjoy family life and slowly going grey.
For peace and good life, go to church and pray.
Reminiscence and arts in dementia care: RTRT overall project statistics

- Number of reminiscence arts sessions 256
- Number of families attending sessions 226
- Number of workers delivering sessions 73
- Number of volunteers supporting sessions 82
A new website to share our findings
www.rememberingtogether.eu
EU Partnership 2012-14

RYCTT
Remembering Yesterday,
Caring Today Training
Meetings in Prague, Perpignan
Poznan and London
The current project seeks to train as many people as possible in all partnership countries to deliver the RYCT project to families living with dementia. We are developing a common training and apprenticeship programme.
Training courses and Apprenticeships

We are developing a new scheme:

• Trainees attend a 2-day training course
• Trainees attend and help to lead sessions
• Trainees prepare a written reflection
• Trainees work together running groups
• Trainees receive a certificate showing they can facilitate RYCT groups
ERN hosted an international conference on reminiscence in dementia care at the University of Greenwich in London June 25-27 2014.

It attracted 100 delegates from across the UK and Europe, with presentations from all partners and apprentices.
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www.rememberingtogether.eu

www.pamschweitzer.com
Why use Reminiscence in dementia care?

- It maximises remaining memories
- It emphasises what people with dementia can still do
- It promotes communication and encourages exchange
- It enables creativity and self-expression, even for people who do not have many words left
Adapting Reminiscence practice to dementia care situations

- Use multi-sensory stimulation
- Explore non-verbal forms of communication
- Allow more time, listen well and “reflect back” what people have said to encourage and support them
- Wherever possible include one-to-one and small group working, as well as work with the whole group
Creativity in dementia care

• Choose themes of common interest where everyone can contribute stories

• Explore the theme through a variety of approaches & stimuli

• Have plenty of thematically related reminiscence objects to handle

• Use drama, music, dance, drawing, painting, writing and cooking so there are opportunities to try new things in each session
RYCT in Europe since 1999

- Repeat trials of RYCT in UK, Sweden, Finland, Denmark & Germany
- New RYCT projects in Eastern Europe, Spain, Northern Ireland, Wales & England
- New project sponsors in UK from private & voluntary sources
- Evaluation methods developed in UK with research grants
- RTRT project 2010-12 across Europe
• Medical Research Council in the UK funded a trial platform, from 2004-2006 into Reminiscence and dementia care, coordinated by Bob Woods (Bangor)

• The UK National Institute of Health Research has funded REMCARE. A randomised control trial has been conducted, with five University research teams in the UK. The results will be reported in 2011.

• The SHIELD project, a concurrent 3-year project led by Professor Martin Orrell from UCL, will also incorporate further testing of RYCT with extra carer support added.
Modifying the original RYCT project

- Project reduced to 12 weeks
- But most projects had monthly reunions
- All sessions involved people with dementia and carers together, with shorter periods for carer support, encouragement and training
- Focus switched to supporting people with dementia to participate fully with carers’ help
- Projects were increasingly health care led