

The Impact of Storytelling in Dementia Care

A Case Study in Opportunities and Challenges



HELLO!

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A brief history of life stories in dementia care



RECOGNIZED FOR DECADES

Goes back at least to the 1980s

- Important to early proponents of person-centered care
- Evolved with reminiscence therapy
- Viewed as helping support identity and dignity




“ *For a person with dementia...a life story book can be an atlas, the compass, the guide to finding their self.*

Thomas Kitwood, 1992



MOST COMMON LIFE STORY TOOLS

Intake forms

 dementia care specialists
A DPH-licensed agency

Life Story Questionnaire

Professional Care Partners:
Use this questionnaire to learn about the clients you work with. Complete one questionnaire with each client and/or the client's loved ones. This great resource will provide you with helpful information as you get to know your clients and encourage their interests and abilities.

Family Care Partners:
Use this questionnaire to help others learn about your loved one. Complete this questionnaire with your family member or on her behalf. With this valuable tool in hand, everyone who cares for your loved one will have the information they need to engage her likes and interests.

Background


Full name _____

Does your name have a special significance?

Do you have a nickname?

Where did your nickname come from?

Where were you born?

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Life story books



Memory boxes





BUT...ALL HAVE CHALLENGES

Time-consuming to create

- Staff do not always make them a priority
- Unequal quality and quantity of information

Hard to digest

- Not always well organized
- Hard to update
- Not all information relevant
- Not convenient

Easily forgotten/lost

- Books and forms can be misplaced or ignored



Digital evolution





MANY DEMENTIA-FOCUSED DIGITAL STORYTELLING TOOLS TODAY



Upload photos and text
for life story book



Upload photos, music,
and text for life story book



MindMate
Upload photos and text
for life story book



Automatically grabs
Internet content



Compiles museum and
other content with
personal content



Professional journalists create
digital biographies

And many others too...



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St. Pauls experience

Chicago-based nonprofit



ST. PAULS HOUSE

A COMMUNITY AS UNIQUE AS YOU.

- 20 dementia-care residents
- 150 total residents



HOW IT WAS DONE...INTAKE FORMS

Generic form

- Questions not personalized
- Not a lot of room for details
- Resulted in vague answers from families

Unused by staff

- Many nursing and culinary staff rarely read them
- Faced skepticism from staff because was not medically oriented



TESTING A NEW TOOL: PROFESSIONAL LIFE STORIES IN DIGITAL FORMAT



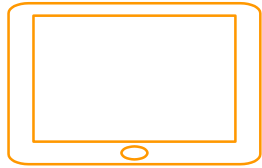
Benefits

More staff engagement

Easier care planning

More empathy

Better communication
with clients



Concerns

Hipaa/privacy

Cost

Some families opt out?

Heavier staff training
requirements



THE EXPERIENCE SO FAR...

Positives

Families enjoyed the experience

Staff love seeing old photos

Better activity planning

New redirection techniques for agitation

Challenges

Many staff still haven't read them

Families wary of technology and privacy

Families slow to get started



THANK YOU!

Any questions?

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