
PRELIMINARY SESSION HANDOUT: PRELIMINARY MEETING FOR PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS



This session is to introduce the *Living Well with Dementia* course and to help you and your family or friends to learn about what coming to the sessions will involve.

Dementia is often a difficult subject to discuss.

However, many people with dementia benefit from talking about what is happening to them. This course provides people with a safe place to meet and talk to others who are going through the same experiences as they are and to learn more about the challenges that they face.

What will you get out of coming to the course?

- ✓ You will meet other people with memory problems.
- ✓ You will learn more about memory loss and how to cope with any problems that come up.
- ✓ You will have a chance to talk through any difficulties you have with people who understand what it's like.

We will try and give everyone who comes a chance to talk about their problems, but you will not have to talk about anything that you don't feel comfortable doing.

What do we mean by “living well with dementia”?

In these groups, we will focus on “living well” with dementia. What we mean by this is that we want to help you and your family to live as fulfilling a life as you can despite any difficulties that you might face.

PRELIMINARY SESSION

Talking with other people who are going through similar experiences is important because that way we learn that we're not alone. But this is also difficult – sometimes it's only natural to want to forget about difficult things.

In the course we will talk at times about “living well”, but we know that there is no cure for dementia. So you cannot recover in the sense of getting better. Coming to the course won't help you to have a better memory, but we hope that you will be more able to find a way to improve your quality of life – to live better.

We believe the best way to do this is to:

- ✓ Adjust to what has changed and learn how to live with it.
- ✓ Be hopeful and find a sense of meaning and purpose in life.
- ✓ Make decisions about how things are now and how you would like them to be in the future.
- ✓ Find a way around problems that come up.
- ✓ Feel a part of life rather than feeling shut out of it.

How long will the course last?

The course will take place once every week for eight weeks. Each meeting will last 90 minutes – and we would suggest that you aim to come to the groups 10 minutes or so before they start to give you a chance to prepare and to meet socially.

What will we be doing in the sessions?

Each of our sessions will cover a specific theme. The sessions are often linked, so that most themes will be covered in two or more sessions.

<i>Week number</i>	<i>Key theme</i>
Preliminary meeting	Welcome and Introductions (with partners)
Week one	Is there anything wrong with me?
Week two	Memory aids and strategies
Week three	Worry, stress and memory
Week four	Finding a way through feelings
Week five	To tell or not to tell?
Week six	What is dementia?
Weeks seven	Living as well as you can with dementia
Week eight	Staying active
Post-group	Bringing it all together (with partners)

Each week, you will be given an information sheet that you can add into your folder. It is important that you read through the handouts at home with your partner. Talk to your partner about the handouts and try

the exercises. They should help you feel more relaxed and develop effective ways of reminding yourself of the important things. Talking about the groups and doing the exercises at home will also help you benefit from the sessions.

Is there anyone I can contact to discuss the course with?

People sometimes have doubts about whether the course is for them. However, our experience is that if they stick with it, then by the end of the eight weeks almost everyone is glad that they came.

If you do have concerns about coming to the course, then please contact your local organisers.

Fill in the names and contact numbers for your course leader and any other important people at this group below:
