

Scenario: Finding Your Things

People with dementia often experience memory loss. As a result, they may misplace everyday items, leave items in unusual places or find it difficult to recall where they have put an item for safekeeping. This can lead to disorientation and confusion. Changes in perception such as processing audio and visual stimuli can also impact people with dementia during their search for items.



Aims

The aim of this training scenario is to simulate confusion experienced by people with dementia during their search for objects



Learning Objectives

- Increase people's awareness of the cognitive and sensory limitations experienced by people with dementia
- Increase people's empathy towards people with dementia
- Develop a person-centered approach in response to the scenario



Equipment

- Simulation Glasses
- Handbag / Briefcase with lots of different pockets
- Pairs of items that are of similar shapes and colours.
- Mobile phone



Downloadable supporting materials

- Presentation slides
- Evaluation form
- Phone ringing sound file

Facilitation Instructions

Setting up:

- Organise the briefcase/handbag in advance, placing 10 - 15 items e.g. pens, sunglasses, lipstick, etc. in different pockets.
- Make a list of 7 items that you will ask the participant to find.
- Halfway through the activity, you will replace 3 items from your list with items of similar shape and colour. For example, replacing a tube of toothpaste with a tube of white paint.



Briefing:

Prior to the activity provide participants with the background information on memory loss and finding objects outlined on the first page of this scenario.

Following this you may introduce the scenario with the following:

- *"This activity stimulates what it might be like for a person with dementia who is experiencing memory loss and changes to their visual function. You will each be given a bag and will be asked to familiarise yourself with its contents. I will then ask you to leave the room and reenter after 2 minutes. When you return you will be given a pair of simulation glasses to wear and I will provide you with a list of items I would like you to locate."*



15 minutes

Activity Instructions

1. Present participants with a bag/briefcase containing items.
2. Ask participants to familiarise themselves with the items in the bag.
3. After 1 minute ask the participant to leave the room.
4. Facilitator: rearrange the location of the items in the briefcase and swap out 2-3 items for ones of similar shapes and colours.
5. Facilitator: insert a mobile phone into one of the bag's pockets. Set a timer on the phone to go off 1 minute after the participant has begun their search for items. Set the timer to play the phone ringing sound file. Alternatively, you can ring the phone after 1 min into the search.
6. Ask participants to re-enter the room and put on a pair of simulation glasses. The facilitator will then read out a list of 7 items that participants must locate in the bag; 2-3 of these items will have been replaced. Participants will not be made aware of the phone or replaced/rearranged items.
7. When the phone timer goes off, the facilitator tells the participant they are expecting an important call and must answer the phone.
8. After the participant locates the phone the facilitator will notify the participant that a nurse called to remind them of their hospital appointment on the 25th of June at 12.45 pm in the west wing of Lake wood community hospital.
9. The participant will then continue their search for items. You can offer some clues if they struggle to remember.
10. After 5 mins or if they have located all the items, participants are asked to remove their glasses to see the items they have located.
11. Following this, you will ask them to recall their appointment details.



Group Reflection / Discussion



Following the activity, take some time (e.g. 10 mins; time depends on whether the scenario is individual or group based) with the participant(s) to reflect on what they experienced:

- What feelings did you experience during the scenario?
- Did the scenario help you to understand the impact of memory loss on people with dementia?
- What could be implemented to help manage these symptoms (e.g. which aids are currently used etc.)

Helpful Tips



- If you don't have access to simulation glasses, try covering the lens of an old pair of glasses with vaseline to demonstrate blurred vision. Alternatively, you may also use a pair of reading glasses to simulate blurred vision
- If you would like to increase the difficulty of this task try adding headphones (avoid using noise-canceling ones) that play white noise. Make sure to adjust the volume of the white noise to a level that still allows the participant to hear the list of objects they need to locate and the sound of the mobile phone.

Additional Resources



The following websites offer some more information on this topic and provide some practical tips:

- <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/symptoms-and-diagnosis/symptoms/hiding-hoarding-losing>
- <https://www.dementia.org.au/about-dementia/memory-loss>