

Scenario: Getting Around A Hospital

In some cases, people with dementia find it increasingly difficult to find their way around and orient themselves in an environment as the dementia progresses. In addition to memory impairment, visual and hearing problems can also contribute to difficulties in navigation or getting around. In advanced stages, people with dementia may have difficulty orienting themselves in their everyday and familiar surroundings and eventually, may no longer be able to find their way home or find their way around within their own home.



Aims

The aim of this training scenario is to simulate difficulty with navigation and orientation in a healthcare facility (e.g. hospital).



Learning Objectives

- Increase awareness of orientation and how sensory changes can impact these symptoms experienced by people with dementia.
- Increase understanding and empathy towards people with dementia.
- Develop a person-centered approach for healthcare staff facing situations similar to the scenario.
- Create a more dementia-friendly environment.



When to Use This Scenario

This scenario is suitable for individuals working in health or social care facilities and may be best demonstrated in healthcare environments. However, this scenario can be replicated in any environment that requires navigation.

Equipment



- Multiple pairs of simulation glasses
- Headphones to simulate background noises (call bell, people talking, phones ringing)
- Suitable environment: corridors in a healthcare facility, patient rooms or simlab
- Projector/ laptop to display video
- Phones to play audio file

Optional equipment

- Glasses that simulate other vision impairments e.g. cataracts.

Downloadable supporting materials



- Slide show
- Evaluation form
- Sound files
- The first section of "Barbara's story"
- Information sheets on vision, hearing, and motor function

Helpful Tips



- If you do not have access to simulation glasses, try covering the lens of an old pair of glasses with vaseline to demonstrate blurred vision.

This scenario can work well alongside the following training scenarios:

- Personal care
- Communication in care

Facilitation Instructions

Setting up:

- If the scenario is performed in a healthcare facility (hospital, nursing home, etc.), ensure in advance that you have free rooms/corridors.
- If participants are unfamiliar with the hospital environment provide them directions to locate a certain room/area.
- Prepare all equipment beforehand and download all necessary website links and sound files



Briefing:

- Prior to starting the activity, please brief the participants on the intent of the simulation.
- For example, you may introduce the activity with the following

"The training scenario tries to show an everyday situation in a healthcare facility: We try to recreate what it might be like for a person with dementia to find their way around a hospital. For this purpose, we use different self-experience tools to simulate the perceptual and navigational challenges that people with dementia can experience. However, it is important to note that this simulation will not reflect every person's experience living with dementia."



20 minutes

Activity Instructions

1. Watch the first episode of "Barbara's Story" and pay attention to how Barbara tries to get her bearings in the hospital.
2. Briefly reflect on similar scenarios already experienced through participants' own experience.
3. Divide the group into pairs: 1 person with dementia, and 1 staff member/ other patients.
4. Ask the participant playing the role of the person with dementia to wear the simulation glasses and the headphones playing background noise.
5. Ensure that the sound of the headphones is adjusted to a level at which the participant is still able to make out what the people around them are saying.
6. The participant playing the role of the person with dementia is then given the task of finding their way around the hospital, e.g. to the toilet, to the X-ray, etc.
7. While the participant tries to fulfill the task, they are addressed by the second participant (e.g. staff or other patients) who will attempt to engage with the person e.g. asking the person where the cardiology department is or asking the person if they have checked in for their appointment. (This is to cause some level of distraction)
8. After finishing, roles can be swapped/changed.



Group Reflection / Discussion



After the scenario has been run, the reflection from before the intervention should be followed up:

- How did you experience the situation?
- What can you take away from the scenario for your (professional) everyday life?

Additional Resources



Additional scenes from "Barbara's Story" can be shown

How can dementia change perception?

- <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/symptoms-and-diagnosis/how-dementia-changes-perception>