

Scenario: Gianni's Adventures

People with dementia may find it difficult to complete tasks, communicate with others and recognise people/places. This roleplay scenario follows Gianni (an older adult experiencing mild symptoms of dementia) and his interaction with four other characters during the course of the roleplay.

Aims



The aim of this training scenario is to simulate the lived experience of dementia through the use of role-play. During the role play participants are asked to step into the shoes of a person with dementia, a family member, a friendly professional and a stranger and consider the emotions this experience may evoke.

Learning Objectives



- To foster empathy towards people with dementia and those supporting a person with dementia
- To increase understanding of the impact of dementia symptoms through the use of role-play
- Demonstrate different approaches by which individuals can communicate with a person with dementia

When to use this scenario



This training scenario depicts symptoms typical of early-stage dementia. It is an interactive form of self-experience and therefore cannot be conducted in an online training setting. This training is most suitable for individuals with limited experience with people with dementia.

Equipment



- Roleplay script for each of the 5 characters (Gianni, Lilli, Martina, Pharmacist, Boy)

Optional:

The use of props can help people step into the shoes of their assigned roles.

- Watering can
- Plant/flower

Downloadable supporting materials



- Slide show
- Evaluation form
- Role play script

Facilitation Instructions

Setting up:

- The training room should be set up so that there is sufficient space to act out the roleplay – a small area at the front of the room easily visible to participants who are not taking a role.
- Print off multiple copies of the role play script prior to the training



Briefing:

You may introduce the role play with the following:

- *"A good way of simulating the experience of dementia, and gaining a better understanding of the symptoms, is through roleplay. This training scenario will be an immersive, theatre-like exercise surrounding 4 characters, one of which will be a person with dementia".*
- *"Participation in the roleplay is completely voluntary. It is encouraged that the participants do their best to fully immerse themselves in the role they are playing in order to take something meaningful from the experience".*



15-20 minutes

Activity Instructions

1. Ask 5 participants who volunteer to act in the roleplay and assign each person a different character.
2. Provide a brief background on each of the characters:
 - **Gianni** is an older man experiencing symptoms of early-stage dementia. He occasionally gets very confused and frustrated.
 - The **boy** is kind but not very familiar with dementia
 - **Martina** is friendly but inexperienced with communicating with people with dementia
 - **Lilli** is Gianni's daughter. She is patient and understanding with Gianni, but deeply saddened by his dementia
 - The **pharmacist** is friendly and familiar with Gianni
3. Allow the participants some time to familiarise themselves with their respective scripts
4. Begin the roleplay, dividing the performance into the brief scenes outlined in the roleplay script.
5. Take a very short break between each scene to reflect on Gianni's interaction with each new character
6. Have a group discussion at the end of role-play to reflect on participants experience



Group Reflection / Discussion

Allow for some time to reflect during/ after the role play. As a group, discuss the following points:



- How did you feel in the role of ___?
- Were there any particular emotions you experienced while playing the role of ___?
- In what ways do you think the other characters communicated with Gianni well?
- In what ways do you think the other characters could have been better in the way they communicated with Gianni?
- Do you think the role play helped you understand the symptoms of dementia?



Helpful Tips

- The watering can is involved in most scenes, so if you can get your hands on one it would be beneficial!

Additional Resources



- **How to support a person with dementia who seems lost and confused:**
<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-find-someone-with-dementia-lost>
- **Information on hallucinations and delusions:**
https://www.dementia.org.au/sites/default/files/helpsheets/Helpsheet-ChangedBehaviours09-HallucinationsAndFalseIdeas_english.pdf