

Worksheet 6:

The person-centred approach in dementia care

The person-centred approach in dementia care was initially developed by Tom Kitwood and the Bradford Dementia Group, University of Bradford, UK. Kitwood argued that viewing people with dementia only in medical terms can lead them to being seen as 'objects' and as having no subjectivity or personhood.

Kitwood argued that a person's experience of dementia not only arises from bio-medical phenomena, such as their degree of neurological impairment and their physical health, but also from social and psychological factors such as their personal biography and day-to-day interactions with other people.

Kitwood described the mutual contribution of biomedical and social/psychological factors on the development of dementia as an equation:

$$D = P + B + H + NI + SP$$

Personality (P)

The unique characteristics of people will affect their ways of dealing with situations and events. Personality type (such as introvert or extrovert) will affect how a person deals with loss and will add to or reduce the signs and symptoms associated with dementia.

If you were diagnosed with dementia, how do you think you might react? What would you do?

If you were diagnosed with dementia, how do you think you might react? What would you do?

Biography (B)

Life history shapes personality and how we have learned to respond to situations. So past experiences will affect current behaviour and responses.

If you were diagnosed with dementia, what would you hope that people knew about you? What important information would you want to share?

Health (H)

Our physical and mental health affects how we behave.

If you were diagnosed with dementia, what other health related conditions or needs do you have which it would be important that others knew about?

Neurological impairment (NI)

Damage to nerve cells in the brain can impair the function of the body that is governed by the damaged area. However, it is essential to remember that many areas of the brain remain intact so individuals with dementia can retain many skills and abilities.

If you were diagnosed with dementia, what sort of difficulties might you have? How might you try to adapt to them?

Social psychology

The way that interactions with others affect the emotional state of a person. Also, the way that society's attitude to others with impairments can either enhance or limit opportunities to be a part of that society.

If you were diagnosed with dementia, how would you like others to communicate with you? How would you like them to be? What would you NOT like people to do?