

Worksheet 5:

The Dementia Quality of Life Instrument (DQoL)

(Brod, M., Stewart, A.L., Sands, L. & Walton, P. (1999) Conceptualization and Measurement of Quality of Life in Dementia: The Dementia Quality of Life Instrument (DQoL). *The Gerontologist*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 25-35).

The Dementia Quality of Life Instrument (DQoL) is a 29-item instrument designed to be used as an interview with people with dementia in order to assess their perceived quality of life in several domains. It is designed specifically for people with mild or moderate levels of dementia as “indexed by the mini-mental state examination (MMSE), Folstein, Folstein & McHugh (1975): MMSE > =13 in the original study; some applications include patients with an MMSE > = 10”.

It was identified following the research-based development of this Instrument that “dementia affects all traditional domains of quality of life (QoL), confirming our belief that the impact is multidimensional”.

The research concluded that the impact on quality of life is disease specific – that is, directly related to cognitive, behavioural, and social changes accompanying the progression of whichever cause of dementia the person is living with. “Thus, although the domains affected were similar to those of other more generic conceptualizations of QoL, the definition of each domain was shaped by the presence of the dementia”.

Furthermore, it was identified that there are five specific Quality of Life concepts (which were taken directly from people with dementia and/or their advocates). These are:

Self-Esteem

(Feeling accomplished, confident, able to make own decisions)

Positive Affect/Humour

(Feeling content, happy and hopeful, joking and laughing with others)

Absence of Negative Affect

(Feeling lonely, worrying, frustration, depression, anxiety, sadness, fear, irritability, embarrassment and anger)

Feelings of Belonging

(Feeling loveable, feeling that people like me and feeling useful).

Sense of Aesthetics

(Feeling pleasure from sensory awareness, looking at colourful things, enjoying beauty, nature, music and watching animals and/or birds, seeing the sky)