

“Let’s Talk about Dementia” Connecting People, Connecting Support

“Never in the history of mankind did not talking about something scary make it disappear”

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Introduction

Dementia is being described as one of the foremost public health challenges worldwide (Scotland's Dementia Strategy 2015) however there is clear evidence that high quality post diagnostic support, provided over an extended period is essential to equip people living with dementia and their families with the tools, connections, resources and plans they need to live as well as possible with dementia and prepare for the future.

Alzheimer Scotland's 5 pillar model of post-diagnostic support describes five key pillars which are recognised as essential to supporting people after their diagnosis incorporating the requirement to support people with dementia and their families “to learn to self-manage their condition”.

The author's ambition was to find a way to share allied health professional's self-management approaches to people living with dementia and their families that was low cost, accessible, evidence based and co-produced.



What did we do?

In June 2014 we launched a weekly blog called “Let’s Talk about Dementia”, (www.alzscot.org/talking_dementia) hosted and supported by Alzheimer Scotland and led by the author with two colleagues in Alzheimer Scotland.

Blog: “A blog is a dynamic website consisting of discrete entries – known as “posts” – which are organised with the newest item at the top. They can be written by more than one author, often featuring content from guest authors on a regular or semi-regular basis” Scottish Health Council 2014

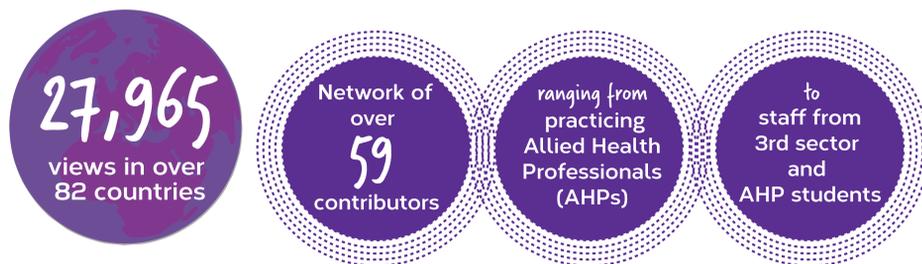


Why social media?

- Globally social media is impacting on the way healthcare is planned, delivered and discussed with 43% of adults using the internet for health information (NHS Employer 2014:161)
- It is free, simple, easy to use and is growing in influence (Holdsworth et al 2013)
- It is a great place to find new resources, share practice ideas, connect with colleagues around the world
- It is a “valuable tool for leaders as it flattens hierarchies and increases transparency”. (Hunter 2013:351)
- It is the right time. Scotland is transforming how it delivers post diagnostic support and self-management for people living with dementia, offering allied health professionals an opportunity to look beyond traditional approaches of care.
- People living with dementia and their carers are users of social media through twitter and blogs.

Impact and outcomes

In our first 12 months we had:



Top areas of interest were

- Actualising work potential
- Delirium
- An enabling home environment
- Art therapy
- Falls prevention
- Communication tips

391 following the blog receiving notifications of new posts every Thursday morning

309 conversations from people living with dementia, carers and professionals

Comments from contributors

“Let’s Talk About Dementia has helped me raise awareness about falls & fall prevention for people with dementia #empowering” @lynnflannigan1

“Let’s Talk about Dementia has helped me raise awareness of practical #AHPDementia tips and advice #enablingenvironments #nutrition”

@JennyAHPDem

“Let’s Talk About Dementia has been a great way to get instant feedback on an idea, you get readers comments the day you publish #passion #creative”

@RuthoTDem

Comments from readers

“It’s great your sharing your news about dementia here as it easily accessible for me living on the Shetland Islands”

“Have shared (the blog) on twitter and facebook so that hopefully my friends will be better able to understand what is happening to me – and of course to other people in the same boat”

“Thank you for such an inspirational video. It is great to see how occupational therapy and meaningful activity can contribute to someone’s life”

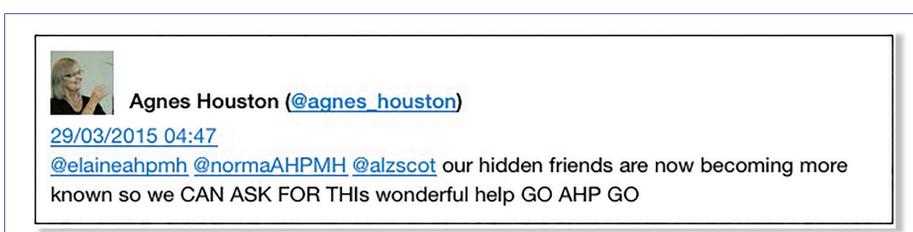
Conclusion

The blog offers AHPs a new way to connect to people living with dementia and their families, providing a platform for individuals to voice their views and share ideas in a branded environment whilst challenging the stigma often associated with the diagnosis of dementia.

Through the blog the expertise of the AHPs is accessible and the reach of the information is international. AHPs have much to offer people to live well with dementia and this blog is one way to support this.

Why not join us on social media, email us your comments on this poster at TalkingDementia@alzscot.org or follow the blog at www.alzscot.org/talking_dementia.

Making sure nobody faces dementia alone.



Acknowledgments

Thank you for taking the time to stop and read this poster. Thanks also to all our blog contributors and readers, we couldn't do it without you. Finally, a huge thanks to Matthew and Wendy, Alzheimer Scotland, who support this blog along with me.

References

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