

Building Bridges:

A Conversation to Explore AHP Practice Education at Alzheimer Scotland



“In order for collaboration to occur there must be a means of bringing together, valuing and aligning the diversity of experiences, strengths and ideas that will inevitably exist among all the relevant stakeholders”

David Cooperrider

Making sure nobody faces dementia alone.

Introduction

This paper is a brief summary of the purpose, processes and outcomes of a day of appreciative inquiry which focussed on allied health professional (AHP) practice education in Alzheimer Scotland services. The event took place in Alzheimer Scotland's head office in Edinburgh on April 28th 2016 and was attended by invited representatives from Alzheimer Scotland, Queen Margaret University, Robert Gordon University, Glasgow Caledonian University, the University of Strathclyde, NHS Borders, NHS Lothian, NHS Lanarkshire and the AHP Team in NHS Education for Scotland. See Appendix 1

The day was planned and facilitated by Elaine Hunter, National AHP Consultant, Alzheimer Scotland and Adrienne McDermid, AHP Practice Education Facilitator at Alzheimer Scotland in collaboration with James Brown, FMA Associates.

Background and Vision

AHP Practice Placements at Alzheimer Scotland are a new initiative. Over a two year period, approximately 100 students, interns and volunteers will have spent time within Alzheimer Scotland services as part of a programme designed to equip a future generation of AHPs with the knowledge and skills, as outlined in Promoting Excellence Framework (2011), to be able to meet the needs of people living with dementia and their families within an evolving health and social care framework. In order to support AHPs to learn effectively within Alzheimer Scotland excellent communication with all key partners is fundamental.

The purpose of the event was to provide an opportunity for current and new stakeholders supporting and participating in Alzheimer Scotland Practice Placements to reflect on the work to date and to make plans for future developments in the programme with the ultimate aims to:

- Share the story of work developed in Alzheimer Scotland
- Explore the future together
- Agree actions and commitment to share learning and the sustainability of the AHP practice placement programme in partnership

Approach: Appreciative Inquiry

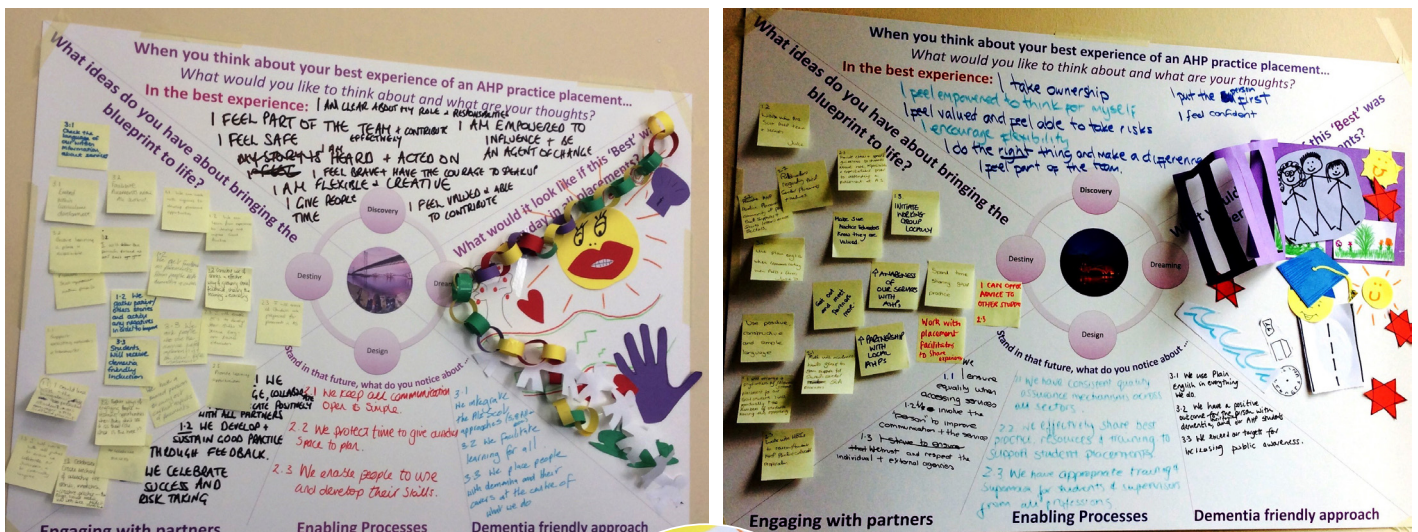
Appreciative Inquiry is a tried and tested approach initially developed by David Cooperrider. It diverges from the commonly used problem based way of working and instead, focusses on building on our strengths and potential for creativity. In this context, we are invited to: recognise the best in people and the world around us, perceive those things which give life, health, vitality and excellence to living human systems. Affirm past and present strengths, successes, assets and potentials and finally, increase our own value and the value of others by doing more of what works. (Fiona MacNeill Associates 2013)

Model: 4D Model

Cooperrider's 4D model which applies appreciative inquiry philosophy was used as a framework for our conversation on the AHP practice placement programme in Alzheimer Scotland. The following powerful questions were designed to encourage creative conversations within the 4D model based on Discovery, Dreaming, Design and Destiny.

- **Discovery (appreciating what is)** "When you think about your best experience of an AHP practice placement...What would you like to think about and what are your thoughts?"
- **Dreaming (imagining what could be)** "What would it look like if this "Best" was every day in all placements?"
- **Design (determining what should be)** "Stand in the future, what do you notice about... engaging with partners, enabling processes, dementia friendly approach.
- **Destiny (creating what will be)** "What ideas do you have for bringing the blueprint to life?"

Attendees were divided into two diverse groups and worked together to create responses pictured below.



Actions and Outcomes

On the day, participants left having made a commitment to take forward actions arising within the process:

"Get out and meet partners more"

"Initiate working group locally"

"Spend time sharing good practice"

"Make sure practice educators know they are valued"

"I can offer advice to other students"

"Work with placement facilitators to share experience"

"Students will receive dementia friendly induction"

"Speak to Service Manager regarding a named Practice Team Leader to share learning, assessment and review for potential future occupational therapy placement."

Attendees were invited to contact the facilitators with news of having achieved their goals:

"My plan was to see if we could support an occupational therapy practice placement at The Bungalow, Bonnyrigg, Midlothian which is a day centre for people with Dementia. I have subsequently had a meeting with the occupational therapy staff who work within the older people's mental health and dementia service, and they are very keen to offer input/supervision/work collaboratively with the staff at The Bungalow and Alzheimer's Scotland to enable future placements to happen."

"I have flagged up by email to the AHP Academic Heads Group that there is a strong desire to widen the inclusion of placement agreements to more than just NHS. We have also released a questionnaire with one question that asks AHPS if they are willing to supervise students in another sector."

Feedback from the day

It was:

"Well facilitated", "Thought Provoking", "Invigorating" and "Empowering"

We:

"Shared experiences", "Generated achievable actions", "Appreciated the time and space to be curious, to listen and learn." and "Built our confidence."

And:

"I thoroughly enjoyed the Appreciative Inquiry day. It was the most positive information/study day that I have ever attended!"



In summary

Since the energising discussions and building on the ideas generated during the appreciative inquiry, a number of positive actions have been taken to advance the work of supporting AHP students in Alzheimer Scotland and our future AHP workforce to be informed, inspired and skilled in dementia care, including :

- Partnerships with three Universities have been established to support physiotherapy placements in three Alzheimer Scotland services.
- A new programme of Dementia Café visits has been established for student Dieticians in the Lothians and the blog post link shares the learning <https://letstalkaboutdementia.wordpress.com/2017/01/26/caf%C3%A9-culture/>.
- We have a new and exciting opportunity working with colleagues in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Glasgow Caledonian University to support occupational therapy placements in Glasgow area Alzheimer Scotland services.
- The wheels are in motion for a new art therapy internship programme proposal in partnership with colleagues in NHS Lothian.
- The AHP Practice Education Facilitator and Executive Assistant & Office Manager have worked together to establish a system which ensures AHP students are fully integrated within operational, IT systems and governance of the programme.
- Occupational Therapy Interns continue to work with the Scottish Dementia Working Group in partnership with Queen Margaret University and Santander Universities UK
- @AHPDementia Instagram account launched and AHP Alzheimer Scotland staff, students and interns continue to share their work and self- management information through this avenue.
- The work has been shared in a leaflet (http://www.alzscot.org/assets/0002/3231/AHP_Infographic_Updated_PAGES.pdf) and a poster shared at local and national events in Scotland http://www.alzscot.org/assets/0002/5369/building_bridges_final.pdf
- Integrating this work into the new AHP dementia policy called Connecting people, connecting support and supporting a skilled AHP workforce in dementia care

Acknowledgements

A big thank you to everyone who works together to make the Building Bridges project happen:

- The Alzheimer Scotland Staff who take the time to welcome and mentor AHP students within their busy services and those in the background who keep all the processes running and ensure that governance is in place.
- Our AHP Colleagues from the public sector who have embraced partnership working to provide professional supervision for students participating in an Alzheimer Scotland placement.
- University Staff committed to ensuring dementia education is woven into AHP education.
- The AHP Practice Education Leads at NHS Education for Scotland who have helped us to gather feedback and to ensure that Quality Standards for Practice Placement are met.
- People living with dementia and their families whose lived experience is central to guiding and informing the learning.
- AHP Students from a variety of disciplines who have embraced non-traditional placements and made lasting contributions to services.

For further information and regarding the ongoing Building Bridges Practice Education programme, please contact Elaine Hunter, National AHP Dementia Consultant by email: EHunter@Alscot.org or on twitter: [@elaineahpmh](https://twitter.com/elaineahpmh).



Appendix 1

List of Attendees

Organisation	Role	Name
Robert Gordon University	Lecturer - Physiotherapy	Paul Moran
Queen Margaret University	Lecturers - Occupational Therapy	Joanna Beveridge Julie Caulfield
Queen Margaret University	Lecturer - Dietetics	Sarah Smith
Glasgow Caledonian University	Lecturer - Occupational Therapy	Lisa Forrest
Glasgow Caledonian University	Lecturer - Physiotherapy	Michelle Rutherford
University of Strathclyde	Lecturer - Speech & Language Therapy	Wendy Cohen
NHS Education for Scotland	Practice Education Leads	Eileen Shar Gail Nash Pete Glover
Queen Margaret University	Occupational Therapy Students	Elly Landrock Nicola Walker
South Lanarkshire Health & Social Care Partnership	Occupational Therapist	Gillian Gowran
NHS Borders	Physiotherapist	Katie Masterston
NHS Lothian	Occupational Therapist	Louise Paul
Alzheimer Scotland	Dementia Advisor	Jane Maskelyne
Alzheimer Scotland	Dementia Advisor	Lorna Hart
Alzheimer Scotland	Director of Operations	Marcia Ramsay
Alzheimer Scotland	Executive Assistant & Office Manager	Julie Drummond