

# Rehabilitation: A new occupational therapy pathway of diagnostic support in dementia

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Approximately 55 million people worldwide are living with dementia and associated problems in functioning that could benefit from rehabilitation. Rehabilitation plays a crucial role in improving the lives and independence of individuals living with dementia and can help individuals maintain their cognitive abilities, manage emotional well-being, improve physical health, and foster social engagement (WHO 2023).

Over the last decade, a group of occupational therapists, with the support of design researchers have developed a series of evidence based innovative occupational therapy rehabilitation interventions to meet the needs of people living with dementia and their families at each stage of their dementia journey. These have been created in partnership with people living with dementia.

We have co-designed a multimodal service model that incorporates a tiered approach of access to occupational therapy knowledge and skills with the overall aim that people living with dementia can access the knowledge and skills of occupational therapists no matter where they are at in their dementia journey including pre-diagnosis and brain health (Alzheimer Scotland 2020).

All the areas in the multi model service model have an integrated evaluation framework including quantitative and qualitative data collection, all being able to demonstrate the benefits for both the person with dementia and family carers.

*“Excellent information...know where to go for more help”*

*“I feel I have learned things I didn’t think of before to help my memory”*

*“I have learned more about dementia and feel I have had time to digest my diagnosis”*

*“I feel that seeing (the occupational therapist) has really helped me”*

*“Liked what I was given to me my memory especially my coloured key ring”*

Community based rehabilitation for people living with dementia is still a new and developing area of practice and often not integral to treatment pathways. However, we have presented a strategic and occupation-based approach to rehabilitation, sharing the benefits for people living with dementia and their carers to maintain their quality of life and promote their well-being with the support of occupational therapy.

## References

Alzheimer Scotland. (2020). Connecting people, connecting support in action: An impact report on transforming the allied health professions' contribution to supporting people living with dementia in Scotland. Edinburgh: Alzheimer Scotland.

Craig, C. Fisher, H. Gray, A. and Hunter, E. (2023) Journeying through Dementia. An Occupation-Based Group Approach for Individuals Following Diagnosis in Occupational Therapy and Dementia. Promoting Inclusion, Rights and Opportunities for People Living with Dementia. Jessica Kinglsey Publishers. London

McKean A., McGrath M., Gowran G., 2023 Occupational Therapy Home Based Memory Rehabilitation in Occupational Therapy and Dementia. Promoting Inclusion, Rights and Opportunities for People Living with Dementia. Jessica Kinglsey Publishers. London

World Health Organisation 2023 The WHO Package for rehabilitation for dementia. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240071131>



## A Tiered Approach to Rehabilitation - Specialist

**Home based memory rehabilitation and Journeying through Dementia:** Occupational Therapy rehabilitation interventions that promote continued engagement in meaningful activity through equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills and understanding of ways to continue to do the things they enjoy for as long as possible. (Craig et al 2023, McKean et al 2023)



## Targeted

**Making Sense Together:** A daily journal containing tips, techniques and activities to explore ways of living well with dementia. People with dementia have used these on their own and with family members and friends as conversation starters and ideas for joint activities (Over 100 pages of content).



## Universal

**Connecting People, Connecting Support online.**

An interactive website with 32 topics full of information and resources supporting health promoting activities into a person’s daily routine using film, illustration and photography. The website is simple to navigate and information is easy to digest.



Thank you for reading our poster and join us to keep talking about the right to rehabilitation when living with dementia or supporting a person with dementia.

Tweet us at @AHPDementia or follow #AHPConnectingPeople and #WithOTuCAN or email us at AHPDementia@alzscot.org with any questions or comments from our poster.

