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REPORT

Screen Memories: Connecting People

Screen Memories is a charitable organisation whose aim is to connect people using virtual technology to promote inclusion and wellbeing.

Screen Memories support people to interact and reminisce about times in their lives that will bring back special memories, thus improving mood and reducing isolation and loneliness.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project involved 14 people who live in three care homes in different geographical locations in Scotland. The aim of the project was to give people an opportunity to connect with another care home via technology and to take part in a reminiscing activity. These activities included films, music and general reminiscence of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. In addition, there was input from a sister project in the USA, Memories International, who had already worked closely with Screen Memories through a series of joint reminiscence sessions based on memories of music from the 1950s, 60s and 70s under the project title of Jukebox Days.



3 care homes



**14 people
who use services**

Three sessions took place over May, June and July 2022.

People's mood and level of engagement were recorded before and after the event. The overall outcome was that the sessions had a positive impact on people's mood and wellbeing. Staff reported improvement in people's mood following the sessions and were positive about the benefits the sessions had for people.

Some comments from the people who took part in the project

“Everyone really enjoyed it, one gentleman in particular was smiling from ear to ear!” (Staff member)

“I remember getting my skirts to look like that. I put a sugar solution on them and then ironed them.” (Relative)

“Takes me back. My dad always sang that song – especially at weddings.” (Person living with dementia)

“Seemed to enjoy herself, she sang lots and laughed lots.” (Observation from staff member)

“This enabled the residents to engage with each other more. Talking about seeing people live in concert, sharing memories with others, talking about films they liked. Everyone was engaged and became more animated in their body language and it did bring people together.” (Staff member)

“Everyone’s mood lifted once it got started, people did sit quietly waiting for it to start. People became more confident throughout the session, engaging more with people.” (Staff member)

“Mum just loves these sessions. She keeps asking when the next one is and loves talking with the American folk.” (Relative)

OUTCOMES – IMPACT

The chosen content was relevant, and participants shared similar experiences as children, teenagers and young adults. This applied to both Scottish and American groups. The opportunity to “meet” people from another country was a huge benefit and gave people a perspective they really enjoyed. The sense of anticipation for the transatlantic sessions was incredible. This was especially true during the increased isolation and loneliness of the lockdowns.

People in the sessions enjoyed the chance to sing along to the songs of their youth. The combination of visual and audio triggers worked well.

As anticipated, the strongest recall was that of the early teenage years and some of the detail being remembered was fascinating, especially among those experiencing memory problems or living with dementia.



OUTCOMES – IMPACT

Content and timescales were important. **The focus on the 1950s, 60s and 70s was appropriate.** The previous focus on the wartime years may no longer be most relevant.

Geographic-specific stimulus material was not always relevant to residents who had not lived in the area where the care home was situated.

Generic triggers were more effective and session three showed the potential for **developing a bank of online material** for use in care homes.

Given current and projected budget restrictions, this combination of existing care home staff and online volunteers and supporters could prove a **model for future expansion.**

The establishment of a **central resource base** that can be adapted for local needs could reassure hesitant staff who may lack the confidence to undertake this form of activity.

The value of these sessions for carers and family members is clear, not just in terms of their respite, but in seeing “lost” aspects of the person that they cared for and **recalling shared experiences.**

There is a noticeable amount of **joy, happiness and laughter** in the sessions which stands in stark contrast to some of the strains and pressures of day-to-day care and support.

Screen Memories have worked to connect people who live in their own home which has supported the person and their carer to engage in the sessions.

Screen Memories have been involved in running reminiscence sessions for people in day centres and other care homes in Scotland.

If you would be interested in finding out more about how Screen Memories can support you to connect with people, please contact Michael White on e-mail: mike@screenmemories.org.uk
Phone: 07706 334909

“Before the group, mood was somewhat low. Throughout the session mood improved and discussion was continued when the session finished.”

(Staff member)