

Memories at the Museum

Memories at the Museum has been created to help staff in care homes and folds facilitate reminiscence sessions with their residents. It can also be used in other settings where reminiscence activities are being held for groups of older people.

The video is designed to be a dementia-friendly resource but can also be used to stimulate enjoyable conversations with people who do not have dementia.

The video features objects relating to the Second World War which can act as triggers to stimulate discussion in a reminiscence session.

The benefits of reminiscence include:

- Participants are recognised as individuals and better understood which confirms their sense of identity and self-worth
- It enhances communication and therefore builds relationships
- It encourages positive social interaction and the sharing of personal experiences
- It uses a 'strengths approach' focusing on their long-term memory
- It is enjoyable and fun

How to use this video

The video lasts just under 17 minutes and focuses on 7 different wartime objects. After a short presentation on each object, a 'Time to Chat' graphic will appear with 3 suggested topics for discussion. Reminiscence facilitators are encouraged to pause the video at these "Time to Chat" points to enable participants to take part in discussion.

The objects and subsequent 'Time to Chat' times in the video are as follows:

Reminiscence Object	Time to Chat (please pause video at this point)
Baby's Gas Mask	3:38
<i>Coupons Required</i> (1941) painting by Leonora Green	6:04
Pure Dried Eggs Tin	7:52
Darning Mushroom	10:11
Rag Bag Doll	12:04
German Incendiary Bomb from the Belfast Blitz 1941	14:07
Wedding Photograph of Staff Sergeant Merrill Hamilton and Patricia Hamilton 1944	16:41

Tips for facilitating a reminiscence session

These guidance notes suggest simple techniques for facilitators when using this video to help older people take part in an enjoyable reminiscence group activity.

Planning

- Aim to have a quiet setting with suitable seating, either at tables or in a circle
- Ensure you use a space where every participant will be able to easily see and hear the video
- Consider the equipment you will need to play the video
- Work with a small group of 5-10 people
- Get to know something about each person's life story
- Plan but be flexible

Delivery

- Address each person by name (name badges can be useful and be colour coded to indicate people living with dementia)
- Speak calmly, clearly and slowly
- Identify yourself and explain the purpose of the video and the activity
- Ask open-ended questions which invite descriptions and elaborations of events, experiences, situations and feelings. Open-ended questions leave control of what is told in the hands of the storyteller and invite responses that others can develop e.g. "What sort of toys did you have as a child?" "Tell us about your memories of the war"
- Be a good listener. Use non-verbal responses and positive body language such as smiles, nods, eye contact, leaning in to listen
- Be open and playful in your approach
- Use short simple sentences and ask one question at a time
- In your speech, match the pace of the participants, allowing time for them to gather their thoughts
- Praise responses to increase confidence
- As the leader, do not regard yourself as the historical authority. Believe the stories being told, do not challenge or teach
- Respond to changes in mood, energy and interest. If energy levels seem low, it may be useful to incorporate music and movement into your session
- Do not ask a person living with dementia "Do you remember?" as it can be too pressurising

We'd love to hear how you are using this resource. If you have feedback, please email Michael Fryer at outreach@niwarmemorial.org or share your experience on our Facebook, Instagram or Twitter

For information about our other reminiscence workshops please visit www.niwarmemorial.org

