

Who's Right? Activity

Champion Tip: Before doing the Information Session, cut apart 5 to 7 of the statements found on page 3 of this document and fold each piece so that the statements are hidden. Details about the person in this activity follow.

You are 73 years old. You were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six years ago. You live with your spouse in your own home in the community.

Say: We are now going to complete an activity. Can I have 5-7 volunteers? Please stand side by side with your backs towards the wall.

Champion Tip: The volunteers should have enough space in front of them to allow taking up to 10 steps forward.

Say: I am now going to give you each a slip of paper with details of a person on it. Please quietly read what's on your slip. Don't show anyone or say anything about the person described on your slip.

Say: Now, I want you to imagine being the person on your slip as I read out loud some tasks. If you think you can do the task, take one step forward. If you cannot, you should stay where you are. Some of you have limited details on your slips, so do your best with the information you have.

Read out loud the following statements and remind the volunteers to take one step forward for each task they think they can do:

- **Are you able to make a cup of coffee without assistance?**
- **Are you able to do the ironing?**
- **Can you vote in an election?**
- **Are you able to dress yourself?**
- **Are you able to follow the plot of a TV program?**
- **Are you able to go to the local grocery store and return home safely?**
- **Can you still maintain good relationships with your close friends?**
- **Can you volunteer to read to elementary children?**
- **Are you able to take money out at an ATM machine?**
- **Can you complete crossword puzzles?**

Once you have read all the statements, ask the volunteers to remain where they are but to look around to see where everyone else is. Point out that they are standing in different places, because of how many steps they took.

Say: Can one of you read your slip out loud?

Have one volunteer read their slip and, if necessary, ask a second participant to do the same. Allow the group to conclude that they all have the same description on their slips.

Say: Everyone with dementia is unique.

Ask: Was anybody right or was anybody wrong in imagining which tasks the 73-year-old with Alzheimer's could do?

- No one person was right and no one was wrong.

Ask: What did we know about this person?

- Not a lot! For example, they could have worked in a café for 30 years and made coffee every day.

Ask: What did knowing they had been diagnosed 6 years ago add to our understanding?

- Not a lot! They could have been diagnosed at a very early or at a late stage of their dementia journey.

Every person is unique and will experience dementia in their own unique way. And yet, we each have some beliefs about what a person with dementia can and cannot do. And too often, we think that a person with dementia is far less capable than they actually are.

Ask: How might someone feel if we assume they can or can't do something?

- That person may become angry or frustrated. For example, how would you feel if someone came into your bedroom and started picking out your clothes and trying to dress you when you could do it by yourself?

Some people will retain their abilities and thinking capacity longer than others. However well-meaning we might be, 'doing for' someone rather than 'doing with' them could discourage the person and cause frustration.

Ask: What did you learn from this activity?

- Everyone has their own perceptions of what someone with dementia can and cannot do.
- People experience dementia in a unique way; no two people will follow the same journey with dementia. Have you heard the phrase "if you've met one person with dementia, you've met one person with dementia?"
- Only by raising our own level of understanding and awareness can we make a positive difference by supporting people with dementia.
- Remember, it is possible to live well with dementia.

You are 73 years old. You were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six years ago. You live with your spouse in your own home in the community.

You are 73 years old. You were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six years ago. You live with your spouse in your own home in the community.

You are 73 years old. You were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six years ago. You live with your spouse in your own home in the community.

You are 73 years old. You were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six years ago. You live with your spouse in your own home in the community.

You are 73 years old. You were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six years ago. You live with your spouse in your own home in the community.

You are 73 years old. You were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six years ago. You live with your spouse in your own home in the community.

You are 73 years old. You were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six years ago. You live with your spouse in your own home in the community.

You are 73 years old. You were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six years ago. You live with your spouse in your own home in the community.

You are 73 years old. You were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six years ago. You live with your spouse in your own home in the community.