About Dementia Adventure Talk - Script

Slide 1

Introduce yourself and your connection with Dementia Adventure

- 1 in 2 people know somebody who has been diagnosed with dementia.
- So many people in this room will know a family member, friend, or know of someone that is directly affected by dementia
- Dementia is the only cause of death in the top 10 without a cure, so finding better ways to live with the condition helps us all.

Dementia Adventure is a small national charity set up 13 years ago by a husband and wife, Neil and Lucy. Neil had expertise in dementia care and support and Lucy had expertise in the adventure travel industry.

- Both sets of their grandparents had dementia.
- They identified that once diagnosed, people with dementia are often at risk of spending a disproportionate amount of time inside. Often at a detriment to their wellbeing.

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- At Dementia Adventure we are all about supporting people with dementia to live as well as they can with the condition.
- There is lots of evidence that shows that getting outdoors and connecting with nature is hugely beneficial for people living with dementia.
- We look at what people can still do and still achieve rather than what they can’t
- Based on a foundation of research Dementia Adventure provides supported dementia holidays and training for family and friends, professionals and organisations. We also share our knowledge and resources online to help people with dementia live more active and fulfilled lives.

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The pandemic and lock downs really highlighted the power of nature for all of us. For people with dementia it can:

- Improve appetite and sleeping patterns
● Reduce stress and anxiety
● Boost feelings of wellbeing.
● Improve communication

Just 15 minutes spent outside each day can have such a positive effect.

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Before video
● Chris was diagnosed with mixed dementia at the age of 51. Jayne is his wife.
● I’m going to let Chris explain how getting out into nature helps him deal with his dementia

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Video autoplays

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● So stimulating our senses by getting out into nature features highly on our supported holidays!
● We also encourage getting outdoors on our free training for family members and friends when they are supporting someone.
● Firstly, let me tell you about our supported holidays:

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● We run around 35 scheduled supported five-day breaks every year
● They take place in specifically sourced dementia friendly venues from the Isle of Wight up to the Lake District and also into Scotland
● Often traditional respite involves separating the person with dementia from their family carer which can be stressful for both parties.
● Our model of ‘alternative respite’ involves providing the support through trained staff and volunteers so that the person living with dementia and their companion can enjoy getting away together.

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● We support up to 4 people with dementia and 4 companions (often the husband, wife, son or daughter but it might be a friend or neighbour).
● The group is led by an Adventure Leader and 3 fully trained volunteers.
With the extra support the carer can pause and take in their surroundings knowing the person they care for is safe.

Often the group provides mutual support for each other which sometimes continues after the holiday.

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- We do all sorts of activities on our holidays
- We go out on a fully accessible speedboat on our holiday on the Isle of Wight
- Here is David driving - he had never done it before. He loved it!
- Everyone gets to have a go if they want to - there’s full wheelchair access up to the steering wheel!

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Judy looks after her husband Bert and here they are on a train ride in Norfolk:

- She was exhausted and really needed a break but was told by a health professional that she shouldn’t take Bert on holiday due to his dementia.
- With our support we made a holiday possible again.
- Judy noticed that Bert’s awareness improved, he talked more interacting with people, and he was noticeably more physically upright by the end of the holiday. They even did a bit of dancing!
- The holiday also really built her confidence and helped her feel more able to continue caring.

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- We support people to enjoy a host of experiences - **boat trips, steam trains, walking with alpacas, or paddling in the sea.**
- And we see amazing things on our holidays.
- **In this picture you can see Jan** who used to sail with her Dad who was the Commodore of Mersea Island Sailing Club and we supported her to get back to sailing in Essex on one of our holidays.

- Another one of our holiday makers **Brian** had spent his life in the merchant navy and was a keen sailor. He came on our sailing holiday on a Maldon Thames Barge with his son. Brian’s communication skills had deteriorated and he was sadly no longer verbal. Brian indicated that he wanted to wrap the sails away, something that he had been doing for many years. After performing the task, his verbal ability for the next half an hour improved dramatically.
• All of our activities are fully risk assessed and with the support of safety equipment and our Adventure Leader, he was able to climb the rigging. When he came back down, he was able to hold a short conversation with his son for the first time in 18 months. He had gone back to something he knew and enjoyed. Something that gave him a purpose.

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Over 42,000 people living with dementia in the UK are under the age of 65. This is called ‘young-onset dementia’

• This is Hannah and Neil and their two daughters, aged 13 and 12. Neil was diagnosed with young onset dementia at the age of 49. Hannah had to give up work to support him at home.
• But holidays became increasingly difficult. And Hannah felt that the she and the girls were missing out.
• So we supported them to have a normal family holiday again in Norfolk. Hannah could never have dreamt of going swimming with the kids and Neil on her own but with our Adventure supporters looking after Neil, she could enjoy some fun family time in the water.

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• All our holidays are subsidised by at least 30%. And through our Dementia Adventure Support Fund we can provide additional financial assistance which can partly or sometimes fully cover the cost of a break. We have some criteria but we understand that everyone’s circumstances are different.
• Esther, her wife Angela who has dementia, and their two children aged 5 and 9 went to the Isle of Wight for a week’s supported holiday, with financial assistance from the Dementia Adventure Support Fund.
• But this video says more than I ever can about our support.

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We use our experience of directly supporting people on our holidays in our training - providing practical, ‘real-life’ solutions for family carers, professionals and whole organisations.
• Understanding Dementia Better training is for family and friends supporting somebody living with dementia
• We run one of these FREE 2 hour training sessions almost every week, including one evening per month.
• These online sessions help people understand dementia better and provide practical hints and tips to help people in a caring role.

Just to give you a flavour of the training, here are just a few of the things that our expert training team talk about:

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They talk about dementia in general and explain that the word ‘dementia’ describes a set of symptoms associated with an ongoing decline of brain functioning. And that it is caused when a disease damages nerve cells in the brain.

They explain that:
  • There are nearly 200 different types of dementia and that Alzheimer’s disease is the most common type.
  • In the UK there are currently 900,000 people living with some form of dementia.
  • With an ageing population, these numbers are set to rise to 1 million by 2025 and 2 million by 2051. That means that nearly everybody will probably be touched in some way by dementia - a friend, a family member, a customer, a colleague.

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Our trainers talk about the different areas of the brain that represent different functions:

  • The Hippocampus is responsible for factual short term memory. This is the part that is often first affected by dementia.
  • The Amygdala which holds your emotional memory can often stay relatively intact. This means that even if somebody can’t remember what activity they took part in, the feeling of wellbeing can remain with them for a long time.
  • We know that getting outdoors can make us feel good. The sun on our cheeks. The sounds of the birds singing.
  • But you might think it’s not worth going to all the effort of wrapping somebody up in warm clothes so you can go for a walk in the park because
they will just forget it has happened. But even if somebody can’t remember it, if they enjoyed it that is what matters.

- It’s all about making that person feel good in the here and now

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The training sessions will also share how dementia can affect memory but also affects the senses:

- Tommy Dunne, who was diagnosed with dementia in his 50s, posted on twitter this photo to explain how he felt walking into a room of black and white tiles.

This is only a taster of the Understanding Dementia Better session which can provide you with lots of information and ideas on how to support someone with dementia and can be booked on our website

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Howard went on our Understanding Better training

- He cares for his wife Natalie, who has been living with dementia for three years.
- In the training the team talked about how to share tasks at home and how to support people to remain independent
- During the tea break Howard decided to see what Natalie was capable of doing, he had taken over the daily chores months before, even making a cup of tea had seemed too complex for Natalie. Howard supported Natalie in the kitchen by breaking down the task of making a cup of tea and as he said “It worked really, really well’ and Natalie felt a real sense of achievement”
- They now share more of the tasks at home such as making the dinner.

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- Here we have Shan with Geoff, who has dementia.
- They went to Devon on one of our supported breaks.
- On the holiday she heard about our training and attended one of our Understanding Dementia Better Sessions.
- Shan found it really helpful to hear from other people in the same situation. It made her realise that she is not the only person struggling and made her feel less lonely.
Over the years we've realised how many people support someone who lives a long distance away:

- Kathy supports her Dad who lives with dementia.
- She lives 100 miles away from him, which left her feeling isolated and unsure of how to support him so far away.
- Kathy had growing concerns about him, because despite being physically able, he had become very unmotivated to engage with conversation or activity.
- She joined one of our monthly free online ‘Mood & Motivation’ 1.5 hour sessions - these are really practical. They explore how you can raise the mood and motivation of someone with dementia by ensuring that each day they have meaning, purpose and build connections with nature.

We also use our experience of directly supporting people with dementia on our holidays and hearing from family carers on our training to build training for professionals and organisations:

- We have worked with thousands of professionals from a range of sectors - from leisure providers to care homes.
- We worked with the care home charity, Methodist Homes Association to include outdoor experiences in their care homes.

Bradggate Park is a popular public park close to the city of Leicester:

- The Park Trust wanted to improve accessibility for people with dementia and expand opportunities for learning and engagement.
- We listened to their ambitions and created some ‘Sensory Walks & Outdoor Experiences’ training tailored for them.
- The team left feeling more knowledgeable and confident that they know how to interact and communicate with people with dementia.

- Our training team offers a free '30 minute consultation' for any groups thinking about starting new activities or making them more inclusive for people with dementia.

Hope you enjoyed me sharing some of the things we do.
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- If you are supporting somebody with dementia, please book onto a FREE training session by visiting our website
- Sign up to our emails via our website to hear about new training, holidays and other news.
- Book onto a holiday

If you are a professional, get in touch to hear more about our tailored training for organisations

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We are a very small national charity, if you can help us even in a small way to spread the word about our services and our positive message - we would be very grateful.

If we had to pay all our Volunteer Adventure Supporters it would cost the charity over £100,000.

- Volunteers gain fantastic experience supporting people with dementia as part of a team.
- All expenses are covered including travel, accommodation and food.
- Everyone stays in lovely accommodation in beautiful locations.
- We have other volunteering opportunities too including Community Connectors who help us spread the word in their local area or help us make connections with potential partners or Charity of the Year opportunities.
- Visit our website to register your interest.

In our last experience survey - 100% of our volunteers would recommend volunteering with us.

Fundraise for us

- Over 80% of our income comes from fundraising. We simply can’t do what we do without your help!
- We have people doing challenge events for us - climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, Cycling to Paris. People do bake sales and sell things on ebay.
- You can request a fundraising pack on our website
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- Thank you to everyone for listening.
- If I can, I will answer any questions you may have— if there’s any I can’t answer I shall get back to the team and follow it up.
- Some questions will be best answered by attending one of our free Understanding Dementia Better training sessions (adjust to audience).