

Reminiscing has the potential to support people living with dementia maintain relationships and communicate more easily considering their current level of cognition. Facilitating conversation can be difficult, especially considering the need for non-judgmental responses.

Why Bother Taking the Time to Learn to Reminisce.

- Concentrates on early memories.
- Gives people the opportunity for re-experiences of a time where they were more active.
- Allows the person who is listening to better understand how the person felt at that time and possibly offer a glimpse of what may trigger current behaviors.
- Provide a structure for enjoyable activity. (particularly when family visit)
- Noting memories, important people and dates can assist for times in the future when the person can no longer communicate or remember these things.

Basic Skills

- Ability to listen without judgement.
- Respond with sensitivity.
- Show an interest in what is being discussed.
- Ability to cope should painful emotions come up.

Home Life

Think about how these prompts may ease into a conversation.

- Where did you live as a child?
- Who lived in your home, and how long did you live there?
- Start out by offering a memory to facilitate conversation e.g. Friday night was bath night in my home. I was one of five boys and one girl, and we all had to share the same water and there would be a couple of us in it at one time, and we'd have often had a fight with Lux soap. To keep the water warm mum would continually top up the bath with a bucket of hot water after scooping out some of the cold.
- Ask what things their mother or father used to say to them about behaving properly.
- What were some of your mums' favourite mottos?
- Eat up your vegetables if you want any dessert!
- Take a clean handkerchief!

- Remember your p's and q's (pleases and thank you's)
- One day you will thank me for.....
- What part of 'No' do you not understand?

Family Mealtimes

Prompts

- Where did your family eat meals, and did you eat in different rooms in the house?
- Who was usually there at mealtimes?
- Did each family member have their own specific chair?
- Who did the cooking, serving, clearing and washing up?
- Who talked the most during mealtimes?
- Were you encouraged not to speak during the meal, until everything had been eaten?
- Were the children reminded about table manners and family rules?
- Did anyone get special privileges if there were leftovers?

Food

- *Explore what the persons favourite food was and how often they had it?*
- Make a list of the dishes you both remember from childhood that are no longer popular.
- Prompt with food including bread and dripping, sago, banana sandwiches etc.
- Did you have certain foods on certain days of the week e.g. Sunday roast, fish on Fridays, fish and chips on Friday night.
- Ask if there is any of those old foods that you could explore cooking now.

Going Out to Work

- Discuss each of your first jobs, and which ones you regard as most significant.
- Describe the work they did, and whether you could still do this now.
- Some people may have had many jobs, others may only have had one trade or profession.
- Did the person stay home and look after the children?
- Are the jobs held still available as jobs today?
- Compare the jobs that you did.

The First Job

- How did they find and apply for their first job?
- What did the interview involve, or was there no interview?
- How much were they paid and how did they get paid (cash, cheque)
- What did their job involve?
- Where were they living while employed in the first job?
- If living at home, did they pay board?
- What were the other people like that they worked with, and did they make friends?
- Was there a uniform or could they wear what they liked?
- What did they spend their pay packet on?

Moving to go to Work.

- Did they have to leave home to find jobs, and how they felt about it?
- How they travelled to and from work?
- How they found somewhere to live.
- How they made friends.
- How they kept in touch with home.

What was it like starting a new job?

- How did they feel on the first day: were they nervous?
- Who showed them what to do?
- How long did it take to learn what to do?
- How long did it take to feel confident in the job they were doing?

The Local Paper

From a local newspaper, or employment app, read some of the job advertisements to start a discussion about the sorts of jobs young people do now, and what was available when they looked for jobs.

Prompt a discussion comparing what shop assistants in a large supermarket do today with what their jobs used to entail. Which is easier?

Adapt the idea to other jobs.