

Memory remediation

Following a diagnosis of dementia we normally invite you to come to a group to meet other people who are living with dementia. Sadly, at the time of COVID we are unable to offer groups. But we don't want you to miss out, so we are sending you this booklet which covers what we normally discuss in our group!

Topics covered in the group include:

Session 1: Getting to know you. Memory, what it is and how it works.

Session 2: Simplifying your home. (Adapting the environment and using memory aids)

Session 3: Problem solving, relaxing and looking after yourself.

Session 4: Mnemonics and visual imagery (tricks to help memory).

Session 5: Thinking exercises, memory wallets and life stories.

What is memory remediation?

The aim of the Memory Remediation Group is to provide people with the skills to effectively manage their particular memory problems. A number of practical solutions are provided for everyday problems, for example remembering important appointments or a person's name. It is an informal and friendly group that offers the opportunity to discuss your memory problems with other people experiencing similar problems. Most people attend the group with a partner, relative or friend but you can attend alone if no-one is able to accompany you.

During COVID, we are unable to run the group. We hope you find this leaflet of its content useful.

**Newcastle Memory Assessment
and Management Service**

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Some exercises normally carried out in our groups

Learning

We explore how we learn and transfer new information from the Short Term Memory to the Long Term Memory. Repetition and practising an activity can help the brain to store new information. The learning cycle adapted from Kolb's learning cycle Using visual or verbal imagery to help the brain remember important information such as people's names. Making information "attractive" or "catchy" helps in recalling information that is important to us.

Remembering people's names

In a group you can introduce yourself with another word that rhymes with it e.g Polly and Holly. Or say your name and a sweet that begins with the same letter: Penny Polo. You can also work with pictures: imagine Polly holding a sprig of holly.

We also explore how to keep ourselves physically and mentally well. Exploring relaxation techniques and healthy lifestyle choices. Here are some of the things we discuss:

Good health and how to achieve a healthy lifestyle:

- Eat regularly and have a balanced meal
- Exercise regularly
- Avoid or reduce risk-related habits such as smoking or alcohol
- Set time aside to relax or take up a hobby
- Smile
- Think positively
- Learn to recognise your own stress signals

Hopefully, by following these steps you will feel better in yourself. However, sometimes we can still feel stressed, and this is when relaxation and deep breathing can help:

Deep breathing steps

Regardless of whether you are sitting or standing, your shoulders should be relaxed and your back comfortably upright.

You should breathe through the nose instead of your mouth.

Concentrate on your breathing and take in a slow deep breath to a slow count of four seconds, then breathe out slowly to a count of eight

Repeat this action three times, then three normal breaths, then repeat the slow deep breaths again.

When repeating the slow deep breaths, tell yourself 'all is well, I feel calm'.

When you have learnt this, you might be able to do this with your eyes closed.

Aims and principles

The group would usually run for five weeks for 1 ½ hours per week – however this is not currently possible due to COVID. Instead, we are sending out these booklets as a reference source which can be read and returned to. They contain the information we would have covered in the group.

The booklets cover a variety of topics associated with memory loss/decline as well as suggesting strategies to address some of the associated difficulties. This information may help you to have a better understanding of memory problems as well as how to adapt positively to them.

Additional resources



The majority of the content of the Memory Remediation Group can be found within the “Memory Handbook” published by the **Alzheimer’s Society (AS)**.

This can be ordered or downloaded from Alzheimer’s Society website www.alzheimers.org.uk. There is also online links such as “Singing for the Brain” and “Memory Wallets” which may help with mild memory problems.

You can also order a copy from Alzheimer’s Society Dementia Connect Helpline Tel: 0333 150 3456.

Additional information regarding the Four Stages of Learning/Competence can be accessed online via any search engine for “4 stages of learning”.

Information about relaxation and breathing techniques are available at:

- www.nhs.uk search for 'relaxation/breathing techniques' and
- Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust has a range of free relaxation techniques in a male or female voice www.cntw.nhs.uk/relaxation

The Age UK website www.ageuk.org.uk has alternative information for “Thinking Skills/Staying Sharp”.

The **BBC website** has links to their “Memory Radio” which helps you to find music (and related information) ordered by decades — try <https://musicmemories.bbcrewind.co.uk/>

They also offer and “Brainsmart Memory Games”
- Have a look at: www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/brainsmart/games/

LiteMind website explains the “Memory Palace” technique that we use in the group. There is also a You Tube video that demonstrates how to apply the technique.

We expand on these topics within the group setting and explore/practise memory techniques in more depth in a safe and supportive environment



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