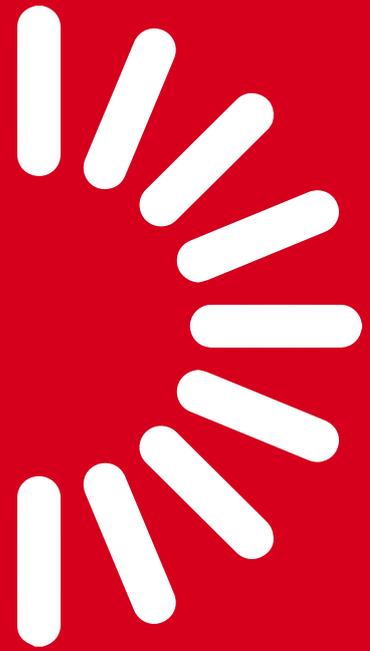


**Dementia  
Dynamics<sup>TM</sup>  
Toolkit**



Dementia Dynamics™ Toolkits have been developed by Flinders University, South Australia and are being distributed to all residential aged care facilities in Australia during 2014/2015. The national roll out of the Toolkit is supported by the Department of Social Services under the Encouraging Better Practice in Aged Care (EBPAC) Initiative.

**June 2014**

## A Personal Message from Dr Sam Davis

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the Dementia Dynamics™ Toolkit. Given this task, I thought I might indulge in a little storytelling to set the stage. It won't take long – so please, do read on.

When I was 14 years old, I volunteered on weekends and school holidays in an aged care facility perched on a hillside overlooking the Mediterranean. This was my introduction to dementia care in aged care settings. It was that classic, picturesque postcard of the hillside rolling down into the sparkling blue waters. However, what was most impressive, and still etched in my memory today, was the physical and social environment of the home itself.

I expect you are thinking to yourselves – a teenager wouldn't reflect on environments – well you're right. What I am referring to is the experiences I had; the warmth of the relationships between all of the people involved and the way each nook and cranny of the building and gardens provided different everyday experiences for all of us. You would often find family and friends having a glass of wine out in the kitchen garden with residents, laughing at the cat draped over the sundial – even the local butcher or baker making a delivery were known to linger – and the doctor could often be found chatting casually in the kitchen, as a couple of residents sat preparing vegetables or helping with other tasks.

Many of the residents did experience cognitive impairment and, there were occasions when they expressed their unmet needs as responsive behaviour. Staff, family, friends and volunteers from the local community worked together to meet those needs and did so from a foundation of a depth of knowledge about the person. The warmth, respect, dignity and validity afforded the residents meant that their personhood – their unquestionable status as a unique person – was first and foremost the guiding principle in the care provided.

I have had many experiences in residential aged care facilities around the world in the decades that have passed since then - some that mirrored those teenage experiences and many that paled by comparison. Despite tremendous efforts by people like you working in residential aged care, there is still a lot to be done to ensure that every single person with dementia living in aged care facilities experiences the warmth, respect, dignity and validity that supports personhood in everyday life. Here in Australia, we are moving into the next two decades with many challenges to face in the provision of aged care – and dementia care will be, if it is not already, core business for aged care providers. The Dementia Dynamics™ Toolkit is one of many contributions that will be needed to sustain excellence in dementia care in Australia in the coming years.

The toolkit has been developed to support those of you working to provide quality dementia care in the residential aged care setting. It is not the ideas or work of a single person. Based on research evidence from around the world, it is the culmination of several years' work by dedicated people in Australia, including the staff, management and boards of a group of rural residential aged care facilities, all with their own special contributions to make. It has been my privilege to be part of this activity.

This manual is part of the toolkit – the guide - to help you make the most of the educational and practice resources provided in the toolkit. On behalf of our team, I thank you all for the dedicated work you do to contribute to the lives of the people with dementia for whom you provide care, and hope that you find the toolkit useful in informing your everyday practice.

*Sincerely,  
Sam*

## About the Dementia Dynamics™ Team

**Dr Sam Davis** is the senior member of the Dementia Dynamics™ team and has been working in the field of ageing, with a particular emphasis on dementia care for four decades.

Following fifteen years working in aged care facilities, she held fellowships at the University of Aberdeen and the Trafford Centre for Graduate Medical Education and Research (University of Sussex), was on staff the Centre for Gerontology, Keele University and the board of the West Midlands Institute of Ageing.

In Australia, she held the positions of Deputy Director of the Centre for Applied Gerontology at Northern Health, Melbourne, Senior Research Fellow with the School of Rural Health, Monash University.

Sam has been teaching online with Flinders University for fourteen years, taking the position of course coordinator for the postgraduate degree program in Applied Gerontology in 2010.

Dr Davis has published in national and international journals as well as industry publications on dementia care, person-centred care and rural ageing. Sam reviews grant applications for the Alzheimer's Association (US) research grants program and the Northern Ireland Health & Social Care Research & Development Division of the Public Health Agency and reviews submissions for the journals Alzheimer's and Dementia, the Australasian Journal on Ageing and Ageing and Society. She is a member the International Society to Advance Alzheimer Research and Treatment.

**Rose Capp** (BSc, BA [Hons], RN, MPallC Aged Care) has worked as a Registered Nurse in residential aged care for 25 years, is currently a Research Associate on the Dementia Dynamics™ Toolkit project and is undertaking a cross-disciplinary PhD exploring representations of dementia in mainstream media. She is also a writer on film, has lectured and published in cinema studies over several decades and reviews regularly for print and radio outlets.

**Bernie McCarthy** is founder of McCarthy Psychology Services and the VET Registered Training Organisation, McCarthy Training, and is a registered Clinical Psychologist with a Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology from Melbourne University. He is a Member of the Australian Psychological Society and the College of Clinical Psychologists. He worked in Aged Psychiatry in metropolitan Melbourne for a number of years before founding the consultancy. Bernie is an advanced trainer in Dementia Care Mapping and author of the recently published book, "Hearing the person with dementia: Person centred approaches to communication for families and caregivers. He teaches on the Applied Gerontology postgraduate degree program.

**Alison Campbell** is a lecturer and researcher with Palliative and Supportive Services, School of Health Sciences, Flinders University. She teaches Best Practice in Dementia Care and Leadership to Support Person-centred Dementia Care. Alison has extensive experience in aged care management and dementia care across community and aged care settings. Her work over the past six years has focused on major national projects implementing person centred environments in residential aged care. Alison is an advanced dementia care mapper.

**Louise Ross** has worked in a variety of administrative roles for over 27 years, and is currently a Research Assistant on the Dementia Dynamics™ Toolkit project responsible for organising and co-ordinating the national workshops as well as supporting project staff in all aspects of the project. Louise has worked in dementia care research since 2010 and is qualified in Dementia Care Mapping.

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