



January 2013

Newsletter No. 58

# Brain Waves



## A monthly newsletter from Innovations in Dementia CIC

The aim of these newsletters is to keep people with dementia and their allies informed about the work of Innovations in Dementia Community Interest Company.

### Two new projects

We are involved with two new projects: one exploring mindfulness training for people with dementia and the other supporting people with dementia to be involved in research.



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## Mindfulness - a way of living better with memory problems?

So much of our day to day life revolves around remembering the past and planning for the future. This can make any memory difficulties much more difficult to deal with.

But does it have to be quite like this? What if we devoted more of our attention to living in the present?

We believe it might just make life a bit easier and we have started a small pilot project to test out whether 'mindfulness' – a technique for living more fully in the present – can help.

### What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a way of training our attention to focus much more on the present moment – the 'here and now'. Most of the time our brains are lost in thought – thinking about the past or planning for the future. In contrast, mindfulness training helps us savour what is happening to us right now. As well as reducing our stress and worries, this way of being allows us to experience our daily life much more fully. And it might just ease some of the difficulties and frustrations that come with having memory problems.

Mindfulness has been found to be very effective in many other aspects of life. It is particularly helpful for dealing with stress, pain, anxiety and depression. There are many clinical trials which have now proven its value. The techniques are simple to learn and don't require any special equipment or beliefs.

### Stage 1: a one-year pilot project:

We are delighted to have been awarded funding from Sir Halley Stewart Trust for a one-year project. With a group of associates, who are all teachers of mindfulness, we will examine:

- Whether it is possible to teach mindfulness to people with dementia
- If there are benefits to people with dementia and their carers from using mindfulness techniques in day to day life.

We will be running 8-week mindfulness courses in Bristol, Exeter and Gloucestershire during Spring/Summer 2013.

If the results from Stage 1 are positive, then we will seek additional funding to collect further research evidence.

If you would like to know more about the project please contact Rachael

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## People with dementia and carers play a key role in a new research study

People with dementia and family carers are playing a pivotal role in a pioneering study led by researchers at the University of York.

The research is into the effectiveness of using Life Stories to influence the care of people with dementia and improve their quality of life. The study has been funded by the National Institute for Health Research Health Services and Delivery (NIHR HS&DR) Programme.

Life Story work involves helping people to record aspects of their past and present lives along with future hopes and wishes, often in a book or folder and, increasingly, in music, film and multi-media formats. Life Story work may have the potential to improve care for people with dementia in a range of settings including hospitals and residential care homes, to support smooth transitions between care settings, and improve quality of life for those with dementia and their carers. The project aims to find out how, and in what circumstances, Life Story work could make a difference.



The involvement of people with dementia and their carers is a key feature of this project. A network of advisers, including five people with dementia and five family carers, will draw on personal experiences to inform the project throughout. Steve at Innovations in Dementia is supporting people with dementia to be part of this network. Nada will be supporting people with dementia to be included in other aspects of the study including taking part in focus groups and creating a short film at the end of the study.

Partners in the study include the University of York Department of Health Sciences, the Hull York Medical School, Dementia UK, Innovations in Dementia, Anchor Trust, the Life Story Network, the University of Hull and Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust.

### Can you help?

Part of the project involves focus groups of people with dementia, family carers and professionals. There will also be a survey later in the year - if you want to know more, please contact Kate Gridley at the University of York - email [kate.gridley@york.ac.uk](mailto:kate.gridley@york.ac.uk)

### Congratulations to Ann Johnson MBE

Congratulations to Innovations in Dementia friend and supporter, Ann Johnson, who received an MBE in the New Year's Honours List. Ann is a nurse educator, lecturer and Alzheimer's campaigner. She received the MBE for services to healthcare.



**Innovations  
in Dementia**

Innovations in Dementia is run by three directors – Rachael, Steve and Nada. We are a Community Interest Company. This means that any profit we make is put back into the organisation.

We do not offer services for people with dementia.

Instead we work with other organisations to make sure that people with dementia can continue to take part in their communities and have active lives.

Please share your ideas, experiences and positive stories with us.

**Contact us**

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