

# Life Stories

Information for family,  
carers and loved ones



**Avery**

Care With A Difference

Knowing something of the life story of a resident can help members of the team to engage with an individual in a meaningful and interesting way.



When working with people who have memory problems or other cognitive difficulties, it can sometimes be difficult for members of the staff team to know how to start a conversation that is about something other than the day-to-day goings on in the care home.

Life Story work is often used in memory care settings as a useful way of helping others to understand more about a person. Knowing something of the life story of a resident can help members of the team to engage with an individual in a meaningful and interesting way.

### Picture Boards

Life story picture boards combine pictures or photographs of places or items that, for whatever reason, may be significant to the person with an explanation of the memories that are attached to these images. It is generally advisable not to include photographs of people in the picture frame, as due to memory difficulties a person can sometimes be unable to recall names which can be distressing. It is often more beneficial if images of places (for example familiar holiday destinations or recognisable work places) or significant items associated with hobbies (for example gardening equipment or dance shoes) are used so that care staff can engage the person in more general conversations.

### Memory Boards

A personal memory box complements the picture board by containing items that are relevant and interesting to the person. It is not advisable for items of high sentimental or monetary value to be placed in the box. Instead a combination of things that have some meaning for the person, for example some bobbins of cotton for someone who enjoyed sewing, recipe cards for a keen baker, some seed catalogues for a keen gardener or old football programmes, are very helpful for an individual to engage with as well as providing an opportunity for staff to chat with a resident.



### Music

Music is often an important part of a person's life story and is frequently used in dementia care as a way of engaging with a person who may no longer be able to easily connect with others. It is very helpful for a care team to understand the type of music that a person previously enjoyed, as well as any pieces that are of particular significance to make sure that these can be made available for a person to listen to and engage with. Please share any pieces of music that you and your loved one particularly enjoys.

Each key worker is responsible for working with their resident in putting together their life story board, musical playlist and memory box. It is important for each resident to be part of the work as the process of life story work is often as important as the finished items. You may wish to join your loved one in being part of this work and we encourage you to be involved.

If you have any queries or questions, please contact the Home Manager who will be very happy to help.

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