

National LAF Conference (South) 23rd February 2016, Bristol
National LAF Conference (North) 1st March 2016, Leeds

Looking at the benefits of dementia inclusive walks

Rachel Niblock and Kath Pyke, Dementia Adventure

Background and brief description

At the Bristol conference, Rachel Niblock from Dementia Adventure ran the workshop and started with an interactive session to highlight the loss people living with dementia experience. Dementia Adventure works to improve opportunities for this group by providing training programmes, running open events and working with partners to deliver outdoor recreation.

At the Leeds conference, the conversation in the dementia workshop reiterated the benefits of contact with nature for dementia sufferers. That there were more people suffering from dementia than you think. Dementia affects not just individuals but their carers making the numbers of people affected even greater. That nature based interventions could be a cost effective way of tackling this ever growing problem in the future. There was a short exercise where individuals listed 10 things that were important in their lives and then imagining how their lives would be without them which got individuals thinking how it was for dementia sufferers who couldn't remember or do things anymore which affects their identity and who they are.

<http://www.dementiaadventure.co.uk/>

Useful twitter site

Tommy Dunne (who has early dementia) on TommyTommytee18

Dementia and outdoor recreation

There are 150 types of dementia, affecting 850,000 people in Britain. The impact can affect memory; attention and concentration; language, visual and sensory perception; senses; and mood and responses.

Even where the memory is affected the emotional memory and connections can be intact. It's important for people to be encouraged outdoors and to challenge preconceptions as the benefits out way the risk. As well as dementia friendly strolls experiences can include such activities as assisted biking.

Some organisations specifically deal with younger people with dementia (under 65).

Projects

- The Woodland Trust has carried out a Visit Woods project with Dementia Adventure. A compelling film was shown at the workshop. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLY_HbPMkEs&feature=youtu.be

- Lincolnshire has developed dementia friendly sensory strolls. The Public Health lead saw work with dementia patients as preventing the hastening of symptoms and invested in training for 5 walking groups. For examples see <http://www.magnavita.org/article/3272/Dementia-Friendly-Walks> The LAF is involved in trying to extend this project further.

What can LAFs do?

- Look into whether the Health and Well-being Board locally has a commitment to dementia. Demonstrate the benefits of dementia activities and add weight to the case for funding.
- LAFs can encourage dementia inclusive opportunities. These are not about distance covered or the number of things you can fit in. Activities can be modest. The important thing is to engage with the senses in a safe environment. This might fit in with Walking for Health schemes.
- Work with partners to obtain free access to suitable outdoor sites or explore funding sources.

Useful publication

Natural England Greening Dementia project -

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6578292471627776>