

FOUND CONNECTIONS



About the Resource

'Found Connections- Hand on Heart' is one of a series of three Found Connections within the 'Valuables' resources developed as part of The Treasure We Seek project.

The 'Valuables' resources have been created to invite people to consider how - or if - they think about the connections that are possible with people with later stage dementia. They have been designed for people who may not have had a previous experience of being around people with later stage dementia, but anyone can use them.

This resource contains a video in which Sheila tells the story of a connection found between a gentleman with dementia, and Dippsy Elderflower. Dippsy Elderflower is Sheila's persona when she works as one of a team of therapeutic clown practitioners (Elderflowers) who are trained to work with people living with dementia. To find out more about the Elderflowers visit www.heartsminds.org.uk.

The purpose of this resource is to invite you to use Sheila's story as the basis to think about your own thoughts and opinions on connecting with people with later stage dementia. This may be something that you haven't spent too much time thinking about up to now. The story, information and questions in this resource are designed to offer surprises and new insights into the types of connection that are possible.

For more information about this project and the other resources visit www.thetreasureweseek.net.

Using this Resource

- Watch this video - <https://bit.ly/3heSYGk>



- Use the noticing questions to guide your reflections, on your own or discussion with others.
- Read a summary of some of the practices which are evident in the video.
- Delve into the unearthing questions to continue exploring the topic of connecting with people with later stage dementia.

Noticing Questions

The following questions invite you to consider what you noticed in the story you've just heard, and anything that has stirred your curiosity.

If you are watching the video with a group these questions could be used as part of your group discussion.

What was there to celebrate / what did you like in the story...

in relation to connecting with people with later stage dementia?

From hearing the story, what are you wondering about...

in relation to connecting with people with later stage dementia?

Unearthing

This section describes a number of specific practices used by the Elderflowers to generate feelings of connection. What follows is a number of unearthing questions which can be used to think about your thoughts and opinions in relation to connecting with people with later stage dementia.

The idea of unearthing is that there are more treasures to be found when we look beneath the surface. The description of practices and unearthing questions are created to help us to 'look beneath the surface' of the story we've watched.

Some of these practices which were present in Sheila's story include:



Introducing something that may be familiar to the person into the interaction, in a way that is accessible for that person

Dipsy sang the Canadian national anthem rather than asking any questions about Canada, as feeling a need to respond to questions about Canada may have been confusing or overwhelming for the gentleman.



Mirroring the person's body language

Dipsy followed the gentleman's lead by also placing her hand on her heart.

Unearthing (cont.)



The person noticing where there is a response and growing this

Dippsy was very aware of noticing when the gentleman was showing interest or enthusiasm for what she was doing, if he wasn't to have shown a response to her singing the Canadian anthem as an Elderflower Dippsy wouldn't feel disappointed by this and would instead remain curious for other cues as to how to connect with him.



The person bringing their own emotion into the interaction

Dippsy listed off 'juicy place names' that she herself enjoyed saying, so that as well as listing place names she was also conveying how much she relished being part of the interaction.



Taking a simple idea and making something of it

Dippsy slowly and mindfully listed through various place names and noticed the gentleman's responses to each name.

Unearthing Questions

- What stands out for you in this summary of the some of the practices used by Elderflowers?

- Is there a word/phrase/image or song that comes to mind for you in relation to the approach to connection described above?

- From your reflections or discussion on the 'Hand on Heart' story, what would you like others to know about the possibilities for connection with people with later stage dementia?