

# MIND THE GAP

 **THE TREASURE WE SEEK** 

Feeling connected with people living with later stage dementia



## About the Resource

Mind the Gap is one of a number of resources, collectively called 'Valuables' which have been developed on the theme of connecting with people with later stage dementia.

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 advanced 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.

In this resource there are gaps that need to be filled; you will 'mind the gap' by thinking about and playing around with various words and phrases in order to fill the gaps.

The main purpose is to get people thinking about ideas we have about what it might be like to have later stage dementia, as well as the words we would like to use, and hear other people use, when talking about later stage dementia.

For more information about this project and the other resources visit [www.thetreasureweseek.net](http://www.thetreasureweseek.net).

## Using this Resource

- The resource can be used by individuals or as part of a group reflective exercise. You will need a pen and paper.
- The text overleaf contains a number of statements which relate to the theme of connections with people with advanced dementia.
- Contained within the text are a range of words in italics.
- From the list of words provided select the one that for you best fills the gap in each of the sentences.
- If there is a different word, not included in this resource, that for you is the best fit for the gap, use this instead.
- After each statement is a 'Mind the Question' box, within which there is a question related to the statements. You are invited to reflect on and respond to each of these questions.
- Once you have filled the gaps and responded to the questions, turn to the final page for further opportunities for reflection.

## What It's Not

This resource isn't a test of your language skills or spelling, in fact its not a test of anything (pew!).

If, by the time you get to the end of the resource, you have spent some time thinking about the ideas you have and the language you use in relation to dementia you are winning at this!



# MIND THE GAP

Thinking about people living with later stage dementia it really is \_\_\_\_\_ to believe that connection can happen.

impossible	irrational	important	incredible
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You may have heard it described that people with later stage dementia become a \_\_\_\_\_ of themselves.

seed	shell	shadow	spark
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Another way of thinking about people with dementia is there is a whole \_\_\_\_\_ to be explored within each person.

window	way	world	wood
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# MIND THE QUESTION

Thinking about the language used in relation to people living with dementia makes me feel...

What words and phrases would you like to see used?



# MIND THE GAP

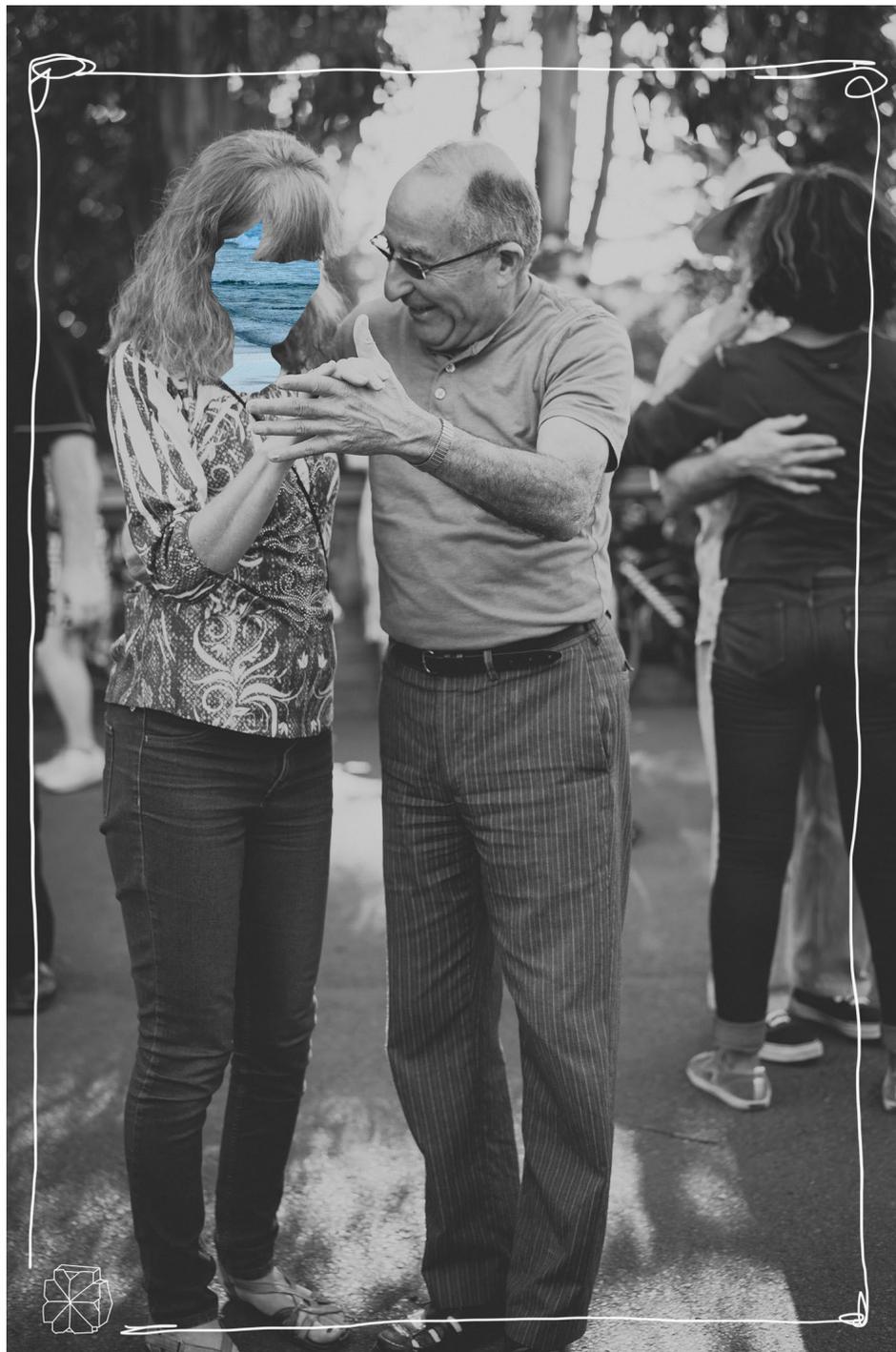
It is important to acknowledge that there can be significant \_\_\_\_\_ experienced by the person with dementia and those close to them.

love	labour	loss	limbo
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However, the potential for connection is not all \_\_\_\_\_

lacking	logical	lost	lovely
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What ideas or perceptions have you held up to now in relation to connecting with people with later stage dementia?



# MIND THE GAP

Thinking If we think about the ways in which we connect with other people, we might think about

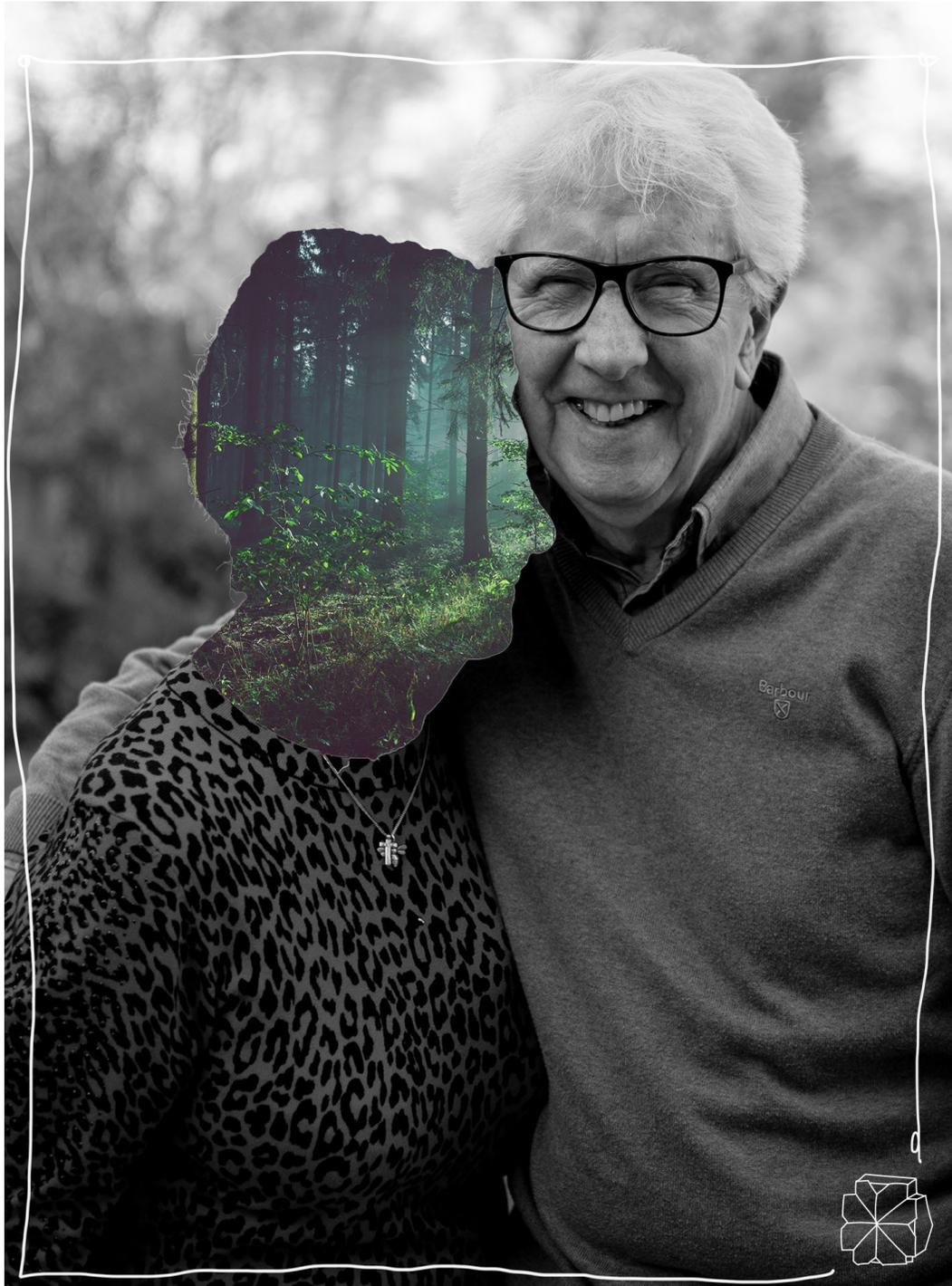
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humour	body language	conversations
emotions	sounds	smells
touch	facial expressions	eye contact
sharing experiences	sharing memories	

Select as many as you like.

Which of these might still be able to be accessed by those with later stage dementia?



# MIND THE GAP

When we consider the connections that can be found and felt when relating with others in ways that don't rely on words alone, it may lead us to be more \_\_\_\_\_ when thinking about connecting with people with later stage dementia.

curious

concerned

cautious

challenging

What would you like to see happen more of the time in relation to how people talk and think about connecting with people with later stage dementia?

## **Our Invitation**

The Treasure We Seek project holds a particular perspective on the language we use in relation to people with later stage dementia and the possibilities for connection that remain. Rather than there being 'right' and 'wrong' answers to how anyone might have filled in the gaps, we would like to share some of our thoughts.

In recent times we have become increasingly aware of the power of the words we use to lead to inclusion or exclusion. The language we use can have a bearing on how we as individuals, and society, treat others. For some the world of later stage dementia may be unknown, or not previously considered. For others, it can be linked with the concept of a person who is no longer themselves or no longer present. How we choose to speak about people with later stage dementia collectively, or an individual basis has the potential to highlight and celebrate their humanity, retained abilities & opportunities for connection.

Whilst it is important and appropriate to acknowledge the multiple losses experienced by people living with dementia, Treasure We Seek project proposes that we can honour these losses while remaining open and hopeful to the potential for continued connection. The connections that are possible with people with later stage dementia will look and possibly feel different, to those that take place in the absence of dementia. These connections tend to rely more on attention to body language, facial expressions, emotions and the senses. Connecting with people with later stage dementia is perhaps less about finding a new way of communicating, and instead more intentionally tapping into a wide range of means of connection.

## Questions



After reading the passage above, in what ways does this chime (or not) with how you filled in the gaps?



Have you any further reflections on the responses you gave?



What is your main 'take-away' from engaging with this resource?