

## THE D-CARE PROJECT

### What is the D-Care, Respect and Respite Project?

The project will deliver training to caregivers in CST, Cognitive Stimulation Therapy. This is an evidence-based methodology, proven to help people who have mild to medium dementia, developed by the University of Central London (UCL) and now utilised by many countries. Other interventions aid people with dementia, but this project is different in that it will deliver knowledge and skills to the family and friends of people suffering from dementia, as well as professional carers.

Respite is important for the family and friends who take on the caring role, to aid their understanding and assist them: for example, creating a dementia friendly home.



### Progress in the D-Care Project

Recently, the team held the third online meeting (using Zoom); all partners were able to attend and contribute to the important discussions around progress and planning the next steps. The Coronavirus pandemic has affected work plans but the team are trying to keep to the project plan and timescale as much as possible.



Work has continued on the ‘Train the Trainers’ course (IO3) and it is now ready for translation from English to all partner languages (Spanish, Italian, Greek, and Danish). The course is available online and once translated, will be made available to organisations other than project partners, as it is recognised how useful this could be for caregivers, both professional and non-professional. A Teacher Guide will be created which will add to the ease of use for this course.

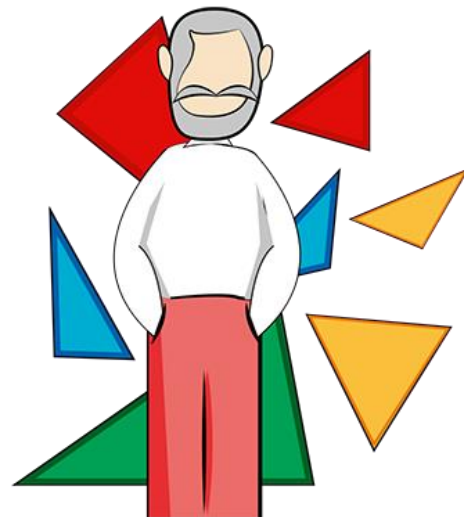


## What is CST?

We keep mentioning CST – this stands for Cognitive Stimulation Therapy. There is no cure for dementia but there are interventions, such as CST, which improve quality of life. The CST developed by University College London (UCL) is based upon evidence and is very specific to a set programme, with activities and sessions as specified.

Cognitive skills are the skills the brain uses to think, learn, remember, problem solve and communicate. There are a number of approaches (interventions) to help people with dementia improve their memory and thinking skills and to cope with memory loss, one of these is Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST).

CST has been developed by reviewing the best available research on approaches to improve cognitive skills for people with dementia.



## Covid-19 and dementia

Of course, all older people are affected by COVID-19; one aspect is loneliness. Physical distancing is crucial in the way we all have to live with this virus, and that is hard for older people, people living with dementia – and their carers.

Self-isolation or inability to visit someone in a care home – how is that understood by the person with dementia? In the UK, as from early March, one person is now allowed to visit someone in a care home – this differs in each partner country.

It is perfectly understandable the effect that the lack of visitors can affect a person whether they live in a care home or in their own home.

In addition, of course it can be difficult to explain to a person with dementia why they should wash their hands more frequently. Equally difficult, is explaining why you are avoiding touching them.

## Loneliness

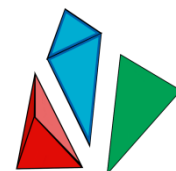
Before Covid-19 occurred, loneliness had already been recognised as an important issue facing many people in society. Social connections and having someone to rely on in times of trouble is one of the strongest drivers of overall wellbeing. Feeling lonely is strongly associated with reporting high anxiety<sup>1</sup> and has been linked directly to poor physical and mental health.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has made it harder to be with others. Contact with family and friends continues to be limited, and social and leisure activities are restricted, which can cause feelings of loneliness – particularly if you are [staying at home](#).



People who feel fit and well often have a more positive outlook on life, and the reverse can be true too. Feeling unwell or lonely is not an inevitable part of ageing and it is never too late to think about improving your wellbeing. Even little changes can make a big difference.

## Looking after yourself as a care giver



A carer needs respite and support to enable them to support the person with dementia better. The D-Care project aims to train and support caregivers with some respite.

It is imperative that the carer finds ways to get some respite, to stay entertained and distracted. Simply by looking after yourself and choosing to do any activity that makes you feel good will promote happiness and wellbeing. It feels good to feel good!



## What is Self-Care?

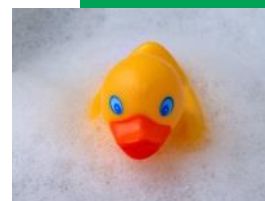
**MAKING A SMALL CHANGE** - this activity encourages us to consider the things that many of us do, as part of our daily routines, but without giving much thought to the pleasure that they bring us. Explore the activities below or maybe come up with one of your own and consider how you can include them in your usual routine. If you were able to do an activity, how did it make you feel? If we can recognise small positives, they become the building blocks on which we grow. Remember- this is a nice thing to do for yourself – it should not feel like a chore.

**DANCE EVERYDAY** Just 10 minutes of dancing every day is BRILLIANT. Put the music up loud, and dance – you can mix this in with doing housework, cooking dinner or whatever you like! Dancing and singing feel good (and are a sneaky fun way to add exercise into the day).



**DONATE TO CHARITY** Go through your unwanted clothes and belongings, pull out ones you really do not need, bag them up and drop them at the charity shop. It makes your home tidier and less cluttered and feels good donating to charity.

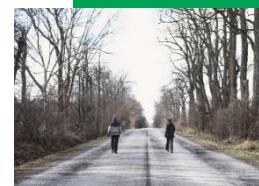
**TAKE A NICE, RELAXING BATH** Fill the bath with deliciously warm water, pour in your favourite bath oils or bubbles then enjoy a long soak. Maybe treat yourself to a glass of wine or cup of tea – light some candles, read a magazine or book, listen to some soothing music. Just do what feels good



**BREAKFAST IN BED** Treat yourself to breakfast in bed – try croissants, fresh berries with thick creamy yogurt and a coffee, load that tray up and take it back up to bed. For an additional treat, take time to read a magazine or newspaper.

**WRITE LETTERS** Not seen someone in a while? Missing someone? Then write some letters – spend an afternoon writing to old friends or loved ones, updating them on your life, tuck in some photos. Real letters are lovely.

**TAKE A SOCIALLY DISTANCED WALK** Going outside can really change our mood, even a short walk can give us time out to enable us to enjoy our environment, notice our local surroundings and benefit from some gentle exercise. A walk may also give us the opportunity to connect with others; just a friendly 'hello' can make all the difference.





**MAKE YOURSELF A LITTLE “QUIET SPACE”** Create a little retreat – somewhere you can just sit, out of the way, for a little quiet time, make sure it is comfortable, cosy and perfect for an afternoon nap or for curling up in with a good book or newspaper.



#### HAVE A PICNIC IN THE GARDEN OR PARK

Spend the afternoon in the garden or the park – pack some lovely picnic food – spread a blanket out on the grass and spend a full afternoon having a nice lazy afternoon picnic. There is bound to be a sunny day soon– make the most of it. If you have no garden, you could go to the park or just sit near an open window, take in the sights and sounds.

#### WATCH THE SUN RISE

Get up early and grab yourself a coffee and toast, wrap up and head out into the garden, or sit by a window, listen to the birds sing and watch the sun rise.

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## Partners

