Hidden Voice is the unique multimedia piece to raise awareness and give a voice to people living with dementia through the beautiful melodies of their speech. Music and speech become one so that the melodies in the speech create the music and the music in turn unpacks the emotional content embedded within, turning the lyrics of everyday life into a powerful and poetic message. Featuring the real life testimonies of people living with dementia, family members and carers, Hidden Voice aims to make you think, to raise questions and deepen our understanding about one of the most important issues of our time.

‘It made me think about the internal emotional lives of people living with dementia, the emotional lives of their carers, and the potential for music to be a positive tool for comfort, support, stimulation and communication’.

Dr. Katie Overy - Senior Lecturer in Music Psychology, Edinburgh University

“A unique relationship between music and dementia”

Professor Alistair Burns – NHS Clinical Director for Dementia

“It made me feel understood”

Becky, Carer – Hebden Bridge
SOME YOU REMEMBER

Understanding the signs, early and moderate dementia, living well with dementia.

A lady, approaching her 90th birthday is talking about her life and is asked by a support worker where she came from: “Oh, no I can’t remember – my memory isn’t as good as it was”. She is aware of herself and her condition and seems relaxed and in control: “There’s so many things” she says “so many things – some you remember and some you don’t”.

The care worker asks her if there’s an important date coming up. She pauses for a second and says: “Oh yes – it’s my birthday – it’s tomorrow – isn’t it?”. “11th February my birthday – I’ll be 90”. She laughs gently: “I never thought I’d live to be 90. Yet when my children were younger my eldest son said: ‘mum, you’ll live to be 90’” and I said: ‘Oh I hope not’. She laughs again.

This lady is living well, displaying a command of important memories and sharing a sense of humour.

TO THINK ABOUT:
What are the signs of early onset dementia?
How should you respond to someone with early onset dementia?

MYTH:
Dementia is one illness
REALITY:
Dementia is a word for an umbrella of conditions including:
• Alzheimer’s Disease
• Vascular Dementia
• Dementia with Lewy bodies
• Frontotemporal
• Posterior Cortical Atrophy
• Progressive Aphasia
• Mild Cognitive Impairment
• Mild Cognitive Enlargement
• Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
• Alzheimer’s Disease
• Vascular Dementia
• Alzheimer’s Disease
• Vascular Dementia

Communication

There’s still something in there
Communication
Tony visits his mum who has dementia with an assessment of ‘moderate’ but without capacity. They share a close and loving relationship with a lifelong passion for following Wigan Rugby Club. He reflects that it’s “a very strange illness” as some days she doesn’t know who he is however he says that when he came in today; “she recognised me’. You can see that he has learned to accept that she doesn’t always appear to recognise him and is able to enjoy the time with her when she does. He describes how she doesn’t respond but she does respond when he is speaking clearly, his phrase “she gives a reply” she is able to understand and communicate. Tony goes on to say that he knows her condition will steadily get worse but he says that “there’s still something in there” – “When I walked into her room today – she recognised me and woke up – she recognised me”.

He goes on to say that he knows her condition will steadily get worse but he says that “there’s still something in there” – “When I walked into her room today – she recognised me and woke up – she recognised me”.

There’s so many things – some you remember, some you don’t.

TO THINK ABOUT:
What are the barriers to communicating effectively with someone living with dementia?
Is it worth talking to a person who doesn’t respond?

MYTH:
People with severe dementia can’t communicate.
REALITY:
They may have lost verbal communication but they can still see and hear and these communication skills should be recognised.

Communication

There’s still something in there

SHARING A SENSE OF HUMOUR

Some you remember
Some you don’t.

Living well with dementia.

Their’s so many things – some you remember, some you don’t.

Understanding the signs, early and moderate dementia.

Living well with dementia.

Some you remember
Some you don’t.
BESSIE WAS A WEAVER

Identity and Respect: Seeing the person first and dementia second

3 sisters sit together every week in a care home. The oldest sister Bessie has dementia but her sister is keen to tell us “Bessie was a weaver”. They talk to her about the work she used to do and Bessie responds by saying “I were happy then”.

The younger sister talks about the quality of support in the care home saying: “they all love her and she loves them”. The sisters display great affection for Bessie and talk about her in the present tense; “She’s such a lovely lady”.

They see her as the person she always was, giving her the status and respect she deserves. This is an example of how we need to see the person first and the dementia second.

MYTH: People with dementia are not the person they used to be.

REALITY: Behind the ‘mask’ of dementia is the person you’ve always known with their own identity and life history.

TO THINK ABOUT:
- How important is a person’s life history in understanding and communicating with a person living with dementia?
- How could you support a person’s sense of identity and self esteem?
- What does the phrase; ‘seeing the person first and the dementia second’ mean?

She’s no longer my mum

Sometimes she looks at me as if she’s looking right into my soul – and you can see her eyes are alight... Sometimes she looks at me as if she’s looking right into my soul – and you can see that she has lost her mind to this terrible disease.

The part of the brain that deals with communication is separate from the part that deals with recognition and this can sometimes create a sense of loss, as the person is no longer the person you’ve always known.

REALITY: Many people with dementia are aware of what is happening around them, even though they may not show it.

But I feel guilty because my mum would need me more... I feel guilty because my mum would need me more.

MYTH: People with dementia don’t know what’s happening around them.

REALITY: Many people with dementia ARE aware of what is happening around them but may not show it.

The part of the brain that deals with communication is separate from the part that deals with recognition. This can affect people in different ways, and this can sometimes create a sense of loss, as the person is no longer the person you’ve always known.

TO THINK ABOUT:
- Is it right for the staff to say that she’s no longer her mum?
- Why does she feel a sense of loss?
The power of music to comfort, to bring joy and evoke memories

A lady is talking to care staff about her school years. She speaks with great clarity and articulation however, as the conversation develops, it becomes clear that she believes she is back at school. Her face becomes animated as she begins to talk about her love of music, the school orchestra and an inspirational teacher. School friends come to mind as she recalls the instruments they played and the happy times they had together. “It wasn’t a very big orchestra - but we had first violins, second violins - and we had violas and cellos – and one of the girls was a wonderful pianist.”

She becomes slightly disorientated but retains a sense of eloquence as she says: “In my school days here music was the thing that came through your blood.” She then appears to come back to the present as she continues: “Oh music is still very important to me – it gives me huge music - music is a huge part of my life really. The noise she creates...”

In her school days the extent of music was the thing that came through your blood. She then appears to come back to the present as she continues: “Oh music is still very important to me – it gives me huge music - music is a huge part of my life really. The noise she creates...”

TO THINK ABOUT:

- Why is music a sense of comfort and support for people living with dementia?
- How can you identify the music preferences of the individuals you are caring for?
Music In Mind is a registered charity to promote the use of music as an aid to public health and well-being, learning and creativity. Innovative projects and performances use music and the arts to raise awareness around important social issues and give a voice to the seldom heard.

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