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The Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia introduced under the last government emphasised the need to create "dementia friendly communities that understand how to help." Similarly, a key focus of the National Dementia Strategy has been on reducing the stigma attached to dementia through promoting public awareness.

This has led to a number of dementia awareness initiatives across the UK, with the aim of presenting positive images and accurate information to demystify the condition and challenge pessimistic assumptions. The most notable national dementia awareness initiative has been the Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friends campaign, which now has over a million members. And there have been several local initiatives, for example the Crawley Dementia Friendly project, a two year programme aimed at improving the experience of services and support people with dementia receive in the community, and, in Bradford, a number of culturally specific dementia roadshows delivered to raise awareness among minority ethnic communities (Parveen *et al* 2015). Such initiatives have generally been aimed at adults; however, there is also a need to educate the younger generation.

Atkinson and Bray (2013) report on an intergenerational exchange project where 22 pioneer schools promoted dementia awareness among pupils. Each school designed a bespoke curriculum to improve students' understanding of dementia. Several beneficial outcomes were reported from this project such as increased awareness of dementia amongst students, reduced stigma and the recognition of the importance of learning about dementia in schools. But teachers also reported a number of challenges such as their own lack of knowledge about dementia and

Dementia Detectives: busting the myths

Sahdia Parveen, Jan Robins, Alys W Griffiths and Jan R Oyeboode describe the one-hour dementia awareness programme they developed for secondary schools

competing school activities. Atkinson and Bray go on to recommend that dementia awareness programmes in schools should have ring-fenced allocated time and be delivered by knowledgeable teachers. Students should also be given the opportunity to generate their own ideas on supporting people living with dementia. Based on these recommendations we developed 'Dementia Detectives'.

Dementia Detectives

Dementia Detectives is a one-hour session dedicated to promoting dementia awareness and is designed for secondary school students aged 14 to 16 years. It aims to foster a positive attitude towards those living with dementia and to encourage young people to play an active role in ensuring that they live in a dementia friendly community. The session has been developed in consultation with young people aged 15 to 17 years. The metaphor of 'dementia detectives' is used throughout as a theme that connects with notions of finding out the truth and working as a team. The session, delivered by a knowledgeable facilitator with support from a teacher, can be incorporated into lesson time for existing subjects such as health and social care or citizenship. A slide presentation, using Prezi, has been set up to aid the delivery of the content and act as an online resource for students and teachers.

The session is structured as follows:

Introduction

The facilitator (Chief) splits students into detective teams: Team Sherlock, Team Quincy, Team Marple, Team Morse and Team Columbo. The students are provided with the following 'brief':

1. Bust the myths surrounding dementia
2. Discover how to support someone living with dementia.

Operation PoD (Perceptions of dementia)

This is an ice-breaker in which students are presented with the question "what is dementia?" and have five minutes to write down their thoughts in teams. This is then discussed with the rest of the group.

Dementia myth-busting

This 10 minute session draws on the best evidence about dementia to counteract myths and stereotypes. The facilitator talks about the nature of dementia, how lifestyles and other factors can put people at higher risk, the way dementia affects the life of the person, the way it might be noticed by family and friends and what can be offered to support people with dementia. The facilitator emphasises that the experience of dementia is unique to individuals.

Operation Identity

To challenge the stigma associated with dementia and labels of 'us and them', students are presented with five profiles of people who live varied lives and are asked to identify which of these people they believe to have dementia. The key message is

that we cannot identify from the profiles which individuals have dementia and any assumptions made on the basis of stereotypes can be erroneous.

We hope to gain Alzheimer's Society accreditation to allow schools to be designated 'dementia-friendly'

Living well with dementia

To include real life narratives from people living with dementia, students watch videos of people with the condition discussing their experiences.

Operation VIPs

The final activity involves the facilitator reinforcing the message that people can live well with dementia if provided with the right support. Students watch the Dementia Friends video prior to working in teams to generate ideas they can implement to support someone living with dementia in their community.

Case Closed

The session ends with a lessons learned summary, which includes five brief statements that seek to reinforce accurate knowledge and positive attitudes.

Top tips for delivering Dementia Detectives

by "Chief Superintendent Robins"

- Have everything prepared and ready to use, make sure all papers are in order ready to give out quickly to avoid time wasting and disruption
- Be aware that young people may have a family member with a dementia diagnosis and the workshop may cause anxiety. Give young people the opportunity to speak to you in private after the session.
- Do not use jargon as younger people will quickly lose interest if they cannot follow what you are saying
- Be prepared to be challenged and questioned, but keep your answers short and concise
- Be sensitive to any signs of embarrassment or shyness with young people and treat gently
- Your adult humour may not be appreciated by younger people, so think carefully before you try to use it
- Avoid speaking for too long and use the video clips as much as possible
- Most young people are always hungry, so take in some biscuits or cookies, particularly if you are speaking to them just before break or lunch.

Post-Dementia Detectives

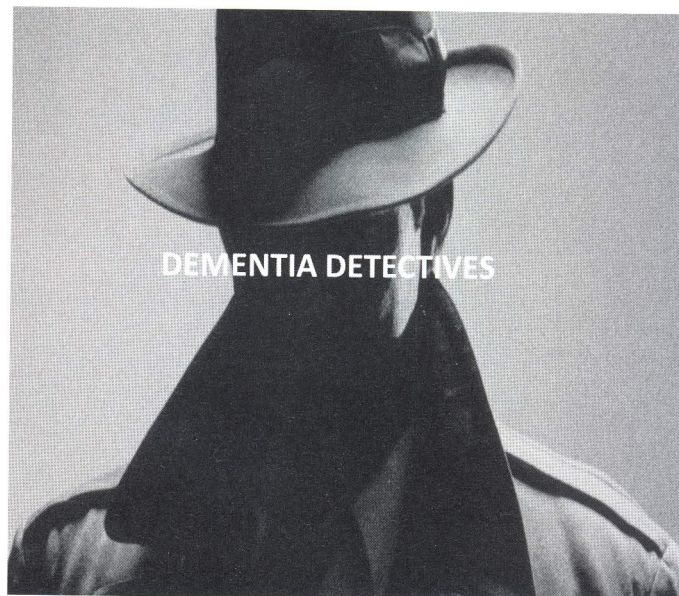
Students can take home the lessons learned summary, which also contains clues (a QR code) to extra activities they can complete at home with friends and family. They are given a link to the Prezi which contains hidden activities that foster further understanding and empathy. There is a Twitter account (@demdetectives) for students and teachers to follow and regular messages are tweeted by the team. Students are encouraged to tweet the team their thoughts and ideas using the hashtag #dementiadetectives

The Cambridge case

Our first Dementia Detectives workshop was delivered in a secondary school in Cambridge by one of the authors, Jan Robins. To evaluate the impact of the session, 38 students were asked to rate their knowledge of dementia on a 10-point Likert scale, ranging from "1 – Nothing" to "10 – A lot", before and after the session. Students' perceived

knowledge improved from an average score of 4.5 to 8. At the end, we asked students to rate out of 10 how easy the information had been to understand and we received an average score of 7.8. We also asked students to rate how much they enjoyed Dementia Detectives, for which we scored 7.9. Thirty six of the 38 students said they would recommend the session to their friends and others.

Students highlighted the "best bits" of Dementia Detectives as: learning about types of dementia, group discussions, the videos, discovering how to become a dementia friend, and finally the biscuits – an important lesson for future workshops! As this was the pilot workshop, students were also asked how it could be improved. The majority reported that they would have liked more interactive activities and physical activities. One of the students suggested that they would have liked a person living with dementia to attend the session in order to provide a face-to-



Relevant
Useful
Educational
Valuable
Interesting
Fun
Inspiring

Finally we would like to roll out the initiative to more schools and conduct a formal evaluation of the impact of Dementia Detectives on the knowledge and attitudes of young people. ■

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face account of their experiences. Words most commonly used to describe Dementia Detectives are shown above right.

Future plans

We are in the very early stages of developing and delivering this exciting initiative. In the near future we hope to gain accreditation from the Alzheimer's Society, which would allow schools to be designated 'dementia friendly' as a result of hosting Dementia Detectives. We are also conducting research with young people to explore perceptions and attitudes towards dementia, which will enable us to further tailor the sessions to challenge specific misconceptions. We hope to start a steering group of young people and people with dementia to produce a wide range of fun interactive activities. Although Dementia Detectives sessions are currently led by an experienced trainer, we hope that in the future teachers will be able to do it in partnership with people with dementia.

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