

Dementia and Communication

Dementia is an umbrella term, there are many different types, all of which can have a range of different symptoms associated with them. The changes often start small, but progress with time and ultimately have a severe impact on everyday life for people and their families. The challenges associated with dementia can be frustrating, but there are a number of different charities and organisations that can help, for example the Alzheimer's Society and Dementia UK.

Among the areas affected, dementia can impact communication. People with dementia may struggle to think of words, repeat familiar words, rely on description or gesture, easily lose a train of thought, have difficulty organising thoughts and ideas and may revert to speaking a native language.

Every individual with dementia experiences it differently, the difficulties mentioned here are not an exhaustive list. For advice on communication in dementia, contact your local Speech and language therapist.

The Alzheimer's Society offer more information at:

https://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure_communication.pdf



This is a campaign organised by the Alzheimer's society. It encourages people to learn a bit about dementia and turn this into action, for example by spreading this knowledge to others, visiting people with dementia or campaigning for change. Anyone of any age can be a Dementia Friend. There is a brief but useful online video to watch.

For more information visit:

<https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/WEBArticle?page=what-is-a-friend#.Vdc2SLIzM6s>

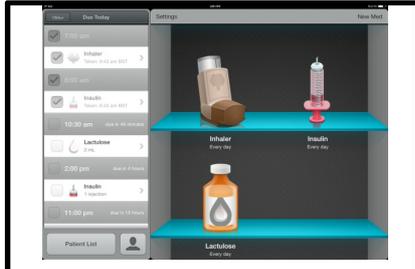
App of the Month



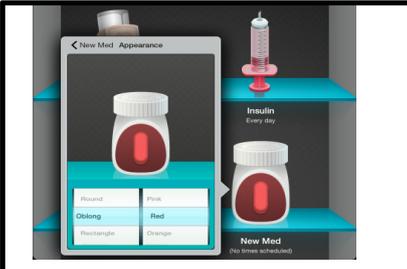
Pillboxie

Pillboxie is a useful app for people who may have difficulty organising themselves, remembering to take medication and/or keeping track of time. This might be due to Dementia, other cognitive difficulties or simply because they have a lot of medication to manage.

- Cost - £0.79 from the Apple App Store
- Android equivalent – no, but apps such as **My Pillbox** have similar functions (although more text based)



Pillboxie is very visual, the user can represent their own medications by changing the shape and colour of the bottle and label (options for syringes, inhalers and powders are also included) then put these in a “medicine cabinet”.



The medicines are listed on the left side of the screen and can be ticked off when taken, helping the user to keep track and aiding memory.



Users or carers can set up a medication schedule. There are a selection reminder alarms and a ‘Nagging Reminders’ option which sets off the reminder tone every minute until the medication is ‘ticked off’ on the list.

This Month's Signs

Doctor

Use thumb and forefinger of one hand to pinch the opposite wrist as if checking pulse.



Nurse

Use thumb to draw a cross on the outside of opposite upper arm.



Pain

Shake open hand over the painful area eg shake hand near mouth for tooth ache.



Tablets

Hold one hand out flat with palm facing up. Touch forefinger of other hand to palm.



Events

Memory Walks- This September Memory Walks will be taking place across the country to raise money for a world without dementia. There is a Memory Walk in Plymouth on 27/09/15. The walks are 2k or 10k in length. Dogs are welcome (on leads). For more information visit: <https://www.memorywalk.org.uk/find-a-walk/plymouth/>

Support for people with dementia

There are many types of support available, one example are Memory cafés. Memory cafés are informal events, they provide an opportunity to share experiences and aim to give people practical support and advice. They are aimed at people who are worried about their memory, people with dementia and their families. Memory cafés have been organised nationwide, some are arranged in connection with the Alzheimer's Society (www.alzheimers.org.uk), others link to different dementia and voluntary organisations.

Total Communication Now Training

Total Communication Now will be organising 3 training workshops in the autumn. These will be on iPad apps for communication, sign supported speech and use of Talking Mats to support choices and decisions. Venue and dates to be arranged. If you are interested then keep an eye on our website or email us to register your interest:

hello@totalcommunicationnow.org



News

Total Communication Now would like to say goodbye to Siobhan and congratulations on completing your apprenticeship. We wish all the best for the future.

Previous issues of this newsletter are available through the Total Communication Now website (totalcommunicationnow.org) or on request via our email address.

Previous newsletter topics:

- Good Communication Standards
- Signing
- Easy Read Information
- Aphasia

If you have any topics you would like to see as TCNow newsletters please let us know through our email.

If you prefer not to receive our newsletter please let us know by email.

Total Communication Now email address: hello@totalcommunicationnow.org