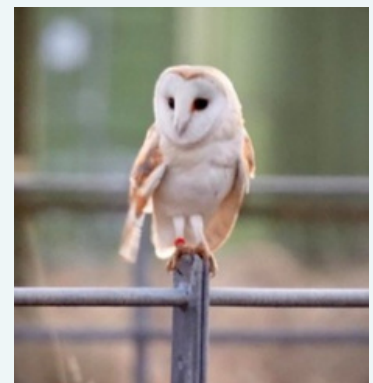


Sign up to our Monthly Newsletter

Hello and welcome to February, great to have all of you with us pursuing our newsletter. We are sure there will be something included for everyone including our new photography section or coping with winter blues or maybe...is technology leaving the older generation behind? With all these amongst lots of articles, I'm sure there will be something of interest for everyone.



I hope you enjoy reading our latest news. Please share this newsletter with your friends, family, and colleagues.

The newsletter will come out monthly with lots of features and dementia news, including news from Deepness Dementia, the dementia community, dementia activism and dementia rights.

Please send your feedback about the newsletter, whether you liked it or how it could be better. If you want to contribute or send in something for the newsletter, please get in touch with me at scottanne@live.co.uk

Please do circulate and share this newsletter on social media and if you want to sign up for all our mailings, the buttons above...

Thanks

Anne Scott





Check out below a list of what is coming up in this newsletter.

If you are viewing this in a PDF format you can click on the links and skip straight to that article. Otherwise, keep scrolling down.

- [**Anne Scott...New Year 2024**](#)
- [**Scottish Online Course for family members in a caring role...Dealing with Dementia**](#)
- [**Gail Gregory...Photography *** NEW FEATURE *****](#)
- [**Anne Scott...Coping with the Winter Blues**](#)
- [**Michael Cheung...Chinese New Year 2024**](#)
- [**Louise Davidson...Art of Movement**](#)
- [**Howard Gordon...Rights in 2023**](#)
- [**Michael Cheung...Playing Mahjong and Mild Cognitive Impairment**](#)
- [**Teepa Snow...Is Technology leaving the Older Generation Behind?**](#)
- [**Craig Colligan...Enhancing the mealtime environment for individuals with dementia**](#)

New Year 2024

Welcome to January 2024! Now what? How do you step out of one year and into another?

Perhaps it doesn't seem to you like anything has changed; just another 24-hour transition. Or maybe, this might feel like a big leap to you instead. Whether the transition to the New Year is a big deal or just another day, it is an opportunity to both look back and look ahead. So, what can you do to smoothly transition into the New Year?

Here are three tips to starting your year off right:



1. Acknowledge what 2023 was really like for you

Take time to look back over the past year. What was it like for you? Acknowledge the tough times, but also think about the times that went well or that you are thankful for. Perhaps you may simply acknowledge that you are thankful that the year has ended.

Know that there is value in pausing and giving recognition to what you are thinking or feeling. How can you move forward until you have an accurate awareness of where you are?

- **Step 1:** Ask yourself, what are two things that you liked about 2023?
- **Step 2:** Ask yourself, what is one thing (only one thing) that you would like to change or try differently? Consider writing your answers down somewhere or tell them to a friend or family member.

Something to remember is that this one change can be anything. It might be deciding to add something to your life, such as accepting support from someone. Or maybe you might be wanting to let go of something; an unhealthy habit, a pain, a hurt, or even guilt.

2. Encourage yourself or someone else to do something

Once you have looked back and acknowledged what 2023 was like for you, take a deep breath, and look toward 2024. Remember that one thing that you wrote down or told someone that you would like to change or try differently? Start there.

But how do you even know where to start or what to change? Making a change is a process. When figuring out what to change, or how to try something different, it is important to be aware that adding something new will change your old routine. But how do we make sure that our new change is an interjection and not an interruption?



Here are 5 steps we can take to help make a smooth transition:

- **Initiate** – get started doing something.
- **Participate** – actively participate in something.
- **Connect** – link yourself with other people, with an activity, with a routine.
- **Disconnect** – disconnect from what needed to change or from what wasn't helpful or healthy.
- **Let Go** – let go of what isn't serving you well, and commit to not picking it back up again.

3. Grow something

Now that you have identified and figured out how to change or try one thing differently, consider growing the relationships in your life or growing your support team. It is vital to have others in your life who can support you, encourage you, and hold you accountable for what you have decided to change.

Maybe as you look around, you can easily identify friends or family members who are already traveling the journey with you. Or perhaps, as you are reading this, you feel isolated, alone, and aren't able to think of anyone who would be willing to offer a helpful hand, much less valuable support. We hear you. That is a very, very hard place to be. You may wish to look into a virtual support group, which can be a convenient option for many individuals.

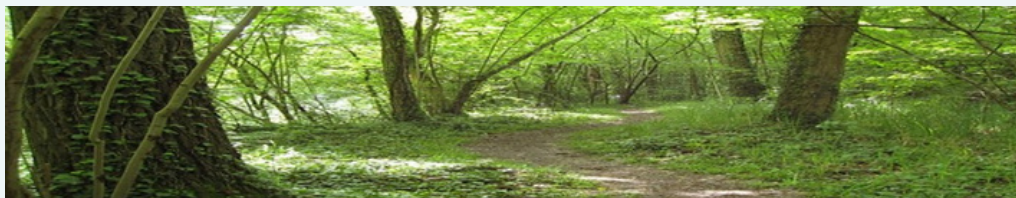


You can start your new year off right as a caregiver by acknowledging what 2023 was really like for you, encouraging yourself or someone else to do something, and by choosing to grow the support around you.

Each journey begins with a step...but we can't take a step until first we get our balance. here.

BACK TO CONTENTS

CLICK HERE



Dealing with Dementia

Supporting Family members who have a caring role in Scotland Join Us for an online zoom course for Learning, Relaxation, and Connection!

Learn more about boosting your health and wellbeing - Join Izzy Valenti, & Karen Taylor every week for 5 weeks. Both facilitators have had caring responsibilities. Please make sure you can commit to all 5 sessions.

Dates: Course starts 14th February 2024, 10.45am, for 5 weeks for 1.5 hours.

Are you a caregiver supporting a family member with dementia living in Scotland ?

Join us for this zoom course dedicated to your well-being and growth. Discover how to minimize the negative impacts of stress, boost your mood with some easy techniques, and learn how to enhance your mood and wellbeing.

Activities:

- Engage in interactive discussions.
- Learn relaxation and stress management techniques.
- Participate in mood-boosting exercises.
- Explore the beauty all around us.
- Great company.
- Find peer support.

Registration:

- **Limited Places:** Reserve your spot by 10th February 2024.
- Register by e-mail to karen@workingtorecovery.co.uk or TEL:- 07884268192
- **Bring an Open Heart.**
- **This is a free event - funded by About Dementia.**

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[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

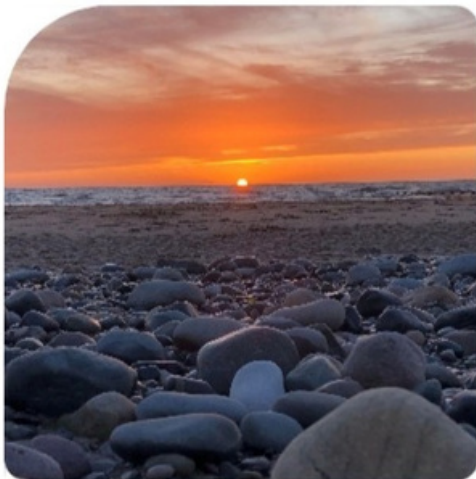
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Gail Gregory...Photography

This is a brand new feature by Gail Gregory.

You may know Gail from our 24 hour radio station, Deepness Dementia Radio. Gail presents her Radio Blog - Living with Dementia. If you haven't heard it do tune into our radio station.

This brand new feature, is Gail's photography hobby, featuring some of the wonderful photos she has taken.



[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[CLICK HERE](#)

Anne Scott...Coping with the Winter Blues

When the holidays are behind us and the decorations are packed away, some of us may experience feeling sad or let down. It is a time of year when many of us feel a bit down, especially with the weather often being chilly and cloudy. While it is very normal to feel a bit sad this time of year, how can we remain active and positive?

If you have just had a lovely holiday experience and you are now feeling down, take a few moments to think back to your very best memory of the recent events. What did it look like? Who was there? What were you doing? What were the sounds, smells, or tastes? Spend some time reminiscing about this memory and feeling the enjoyment again.



Then, allow yourself to feel sad that it has ended, but take steps to move forward.

One way to do this is to take one small part of the positive, pleasurable moment, and recreate it. For instance, let's say your favourite holiday memory was sipping hot chocolate and chatting with your granddaughter, but she lives far away and isn't often able to visit. Consider writing her a card to tell her how much you enjoyed the activity with her. Then, perhaps plan something based around the activity – you might, for example, invite her to join you for a short video chat on the phone or computer while you both enjoy a cup of hot chocolate.

As another example, if your favourite memory involved attending a worship service with a beautiful choir and lit candles, find a recording of choir music that you enjoy, light some candles, and enjoy a peaceful listening experience. Or, if you enjoy live music, consider planning to attend another choir concert sometime in the near future. Find an element of the positive holiday memory to carry with you into the new year.

If you are sad because you wished the holidays had gone differently, or you are nostalgic for the way they used to be, and you are having trouble moving forward, try thinking of a time when you felt the most depressed in your life. What were your strategies for moving out of it? Did you talk to a friend, plan a trip, or make another change in your life that helped to turn things around? Use what has worked for you in the past.

Making plans for something to look forward to can also be very helpful this time of year. It can be something simple, like a warm bath or tea with a friend, or something more elaborate, like planning a trip.

In addition, healthy eating, daily exercise, fresh air, and adequate sleep can truly help to improve your overall mood and well-being. Even a short daily walk outside can do wonders for your mental health. If you are physically able to, bundle up and go outside! Finding an indoor area where you can walk is another option, if the weather is truly terrible. Set a goal for yourself to do at least one physically active activity each day.



In addition, healthy eating, daily exercise, fresh air, and adequate sleep can truly help to improve your overall mood and well-being. Even a short daily walk outside can do wonders for your mental health. If you are physically able to, bundle up and go outside! Finding an indoor area where you can walk is another option, if the weather is truly terrible. Set a goal for yourself to do at least one physically active activity each day.

It is also important to recognize that if your feelings of sadness do not improve, please speak with a health care provider. You may need a bit of therapy or medication to help you feel like yourself again. Recognize when you are really stuck and need a bit of help to move forward.

Remember, it is healthy to allow yourself to feel a little sad when the holidays are over and the days are a bit dark, but take steps to move forward from the sad feelings. Take action to care for your mental health so that you may create new joyful memories in 2024!

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[CLICK HERE](#)

Michael Cheung...Chinese New Year 2024

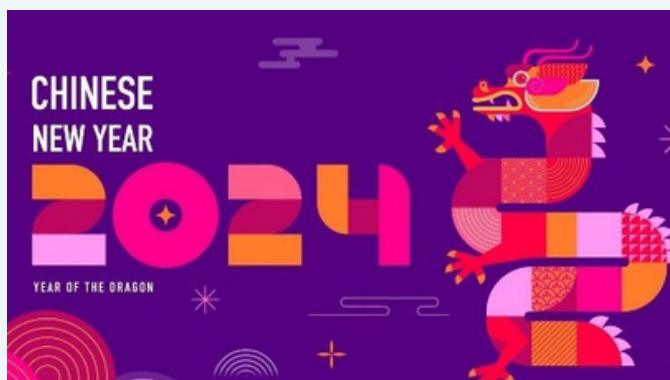
Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival or Lunar New Year, is one of the most important and widely celebrated festivals in Chinese culture. It marks the beginning of the lunar new year and is a time for family reunions, cultural festivities, and the welcoming of a new year with hope and optimism.



This is the year of the Dragon according to the Chinese zodiac. Each year in the Chinese zodiac is associated with an animal sign, and the Dragon is considered a symbol of strength, courage, and good fortune. It is a time to embrace Chinese traditions, enjoy delicious food, and wish for prosperity and happiness in the year ahead. Chinese New Year falls on different dates each year as it follows the lunar calendar. In 2024, Chinese New Year begins on February 10th and continues for 15 days, with the Lantern Festival marking the end of the celebrations.

How some Asian countries Celebrate Chinese New Year 2024. Celebrating Chinese New Year is a wonderful way to immerse themselves in Chinese culture and traditions.

- Family & friends' reunions: Like Thanksgiving in Western cultures, Chinese New Year is a time for family/friend's gatherings.
- Decorate with Red: Red is the primary colour associated with good luck and happiness in Chinese culture. Decorate your home with red lanterns, couplets, and other festive items.



- **Enjoy Traditional Foods:** Savour traditional Chinese dishes such as dumplings, spring rolls, fish, and rice cakes. These foods carry symbolic meanings related to prosperity and abundance.
- **Give Red Envelopes (Hongbao):** It's customary to give red envelopes containing money as a gesture of goodwill and blessings. This is particularly common when visiting friends and family.
- **Watch Dragon and Lion Dances:** Attend local parades or performances featuring vibrant dragon and lion dances. These dances are believed to bring good luck and drive away evil spirits.

Year of the Dragon

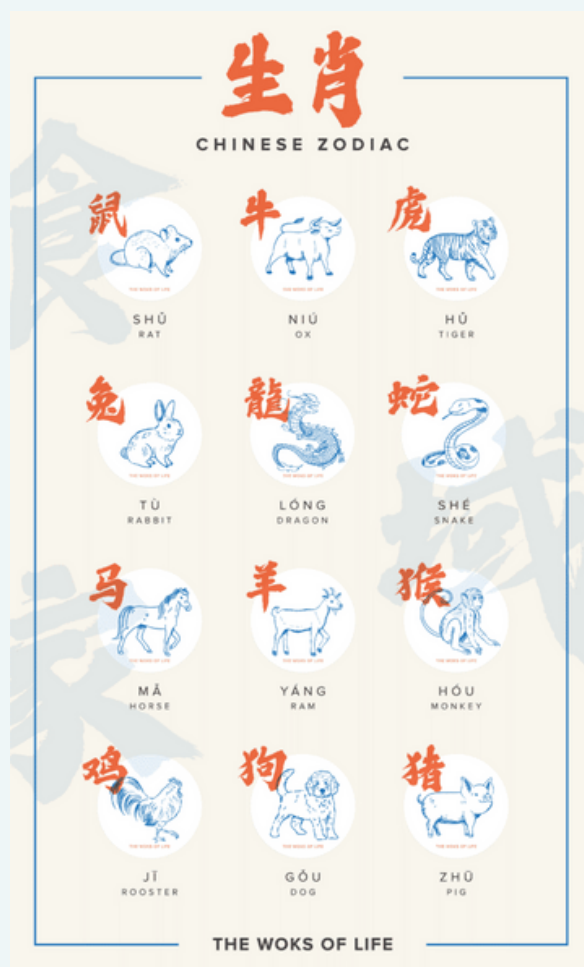
The Lunar New Year mark the arrival of spring, but the Year of the Dragon also signifies a year of prosperity and harmony. The date of Lunar New Year differs every year. In 2024 it occurs on 10 February.

The Chinese zodiac sign of the Dragon represents power, success, honour, and luck among the Chinese. You can see why many Chinese parents want to have children in Dragon years! Hopefully, the year of the Wood Dragon will be a creative and auspicious year of progress for everyone.

In many cultures, each year is also associated with an animal from the zodiac. Often the animals are the same across cultures – including China, South Korea, North Korea, Singapore, and Cambodia.

Chinese Zodiac Years

Since the Chinese zodiac cycle repeats every 12 years, it's easy to figure out if it's your year—just check if your age is a multiple of 12!





Listed below are the 12 zodiac animals in order with accompanying years:

ZODIAC SIGN

ZODIAC YEARS

1. Rat 鼠 (shǔ) 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020
2. Ox 牛 (niú) 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021
3. Tiger 虎 (hǔ) 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010, 2022
4. Rabbit 兔 (tù) 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023
5. Dragon 龙 (lóng) 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024
6. Snake 蛇 (shé) 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025
7. Horse 马 (mǎ) 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026
8. Goat 羊 (yáng) 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027
9. Monkey 猴 (hóu) 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028
10. Rooster 鸡 (jī) 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029
11. Dog 狗 (gǒu) 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030
12. Pig 猪 (zhū) 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031

1. Rat (鼠 / Shǔ) - People born in the year of the Rat like saving and collecting. They never have hard times financially and live organized lives. If you receive a valuable gift from a Rat, know that he thinks highly of you, because he doesn't usually like opening his wallet for others. Rats don't look for praise and recognition. They are very sensitive and know when there is trouble. When they do take risks, they're usually successful.

2. Ox (牛 / Niu) People born in the year of the Ox are hard workers and have a strong sense of responsibility. Even if they run into difficulty during work, they'll persevere through. They aren't very romantic but are patient and would never force themselves onto someone who doesn't like them. They are usually quiet and keep their emotions bottled up inside. It's hard for others to understand them. When they do lose their temper, it's like an explosion and can drive others away.

3. Tiger (虎 / Hǔ) - People born in the year of the Tiger are independent and have high self-esteem. They enjoy being the leader and protector of average people. They love justice and never back down in an argument. Recklessness is their biggest weakness, causing them to fail. However, they never truly fail. Tigers will always find a way to stand back up and succeed in the end.

4. Rabbit (兔 / Tù) - People born in the year of the Rabbit are gentle, quiet and polite. They are patient, intelligent and chic. Their sense of responsibility and attention to detail lead to great career success. They take love seriously as well and would never fall for someone easily. If they find the right person, they'll love them to the end of the world and back.

5. Dragon (龙 / Lóng) - People born in the year of the Dragon have hearts full of adventure and romance. It's hard for people to understand a Dragon's mysterious personality. At the same time, they are indifferent to things the average person worries about. They may seem lazy, but once they decide to do something, they'll be more ambitious and vigorous than anyone else.

6. Snake (蛇 / Shé) - People born in the year of the Snake are idealists. On the outside, they may seem cold but, deep inside, they are warm and enthusiastic. Their desire of exclusive ownership is very fierce. It irks them if they can't fully understand someone. Snakes are devoted and determined, but their worst enemy is laziness.

7. Horse (马 / Mǎ) - People born in the year of the Horse are never one to surrender. They are always positive and energetic, pushing themselves forward. Their biggest desire is to have the freedom to do what they like and be able to express themselves. However, they also have various negative traits. Horses are bad at keeping secrets and lose interest quickly.

8. Goat (羊 / Yang) - People born in the year of the Goat have a pure and kind heart. They'd rather suffer silently than argue and ruin someone else's mood. However, even in silence, they still hold onto their own opinion. In regard to their passions, they will do anything possible to fulfil their wishes. Though kind, Goats have tricks up their sleeves as well. They are skilled at using soft power, able to persuade others patiently and politely into their favour.

9. Monkey (猴 / Hóu) - People born in the year of the Monkey do things based on interest. If it's something they don't quite care for, they'll do the work sloppily. If it's something they're interested in, they'll put their entire heart into it and work until they succeed. They live a long life full of energy and curiosity for the world.

10. Rooster (鸡 / Jī) - People born in the year of the Rooster are able to sense what the other person is thinking or feeling. They have quick reactions and high IQ. They make great friends, although some are cunning. Roosters are creative and talented in the arts, although few find a career in that field. They have foresight and plan everything carefully.

11. Dog (狗 / Gǒu) - People born in the year of the Dog are conservative and full of justice. Because of their loyalty, Dogs are valued in the workplace. They rarely break rules, except for people important to them. In life, they only wish to live quietly with their family.



12. Pig (猪 / Zhū) - People born in the year of the Pig think logically and are able to fix whatever problem they're in. They aren't good communicators, but they're kind and able to provide for the family. Most of them are wealthy. Their only obvious fault is that they lose their temper easily.

This month's recipe for Chinese New Year:

Lion's Head Meatballs

This classic Chinese meatball dish is very suitable for being served as part of Chinese New Year celebration meals or anytime throughout the year.

Prep Time: **10 mins**

Cook Time: **70 mins**

Serves: **3-4 persons**

Ingredients:

- 250 gm pork mince
- 1 tsp freshly grated ginger
- 80 gm mashed potato (see method below)
- 3 Tbsp breadcrumbs
- 3 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked and diced, can use ordinary mushrooms.
- ½ Chinese sausages (aka lap chang 臘腸), blanched and diced or lardons
- 1 egg white
- 150 gm napa cabbage (Chinese cabbage)
- 150 ml. chicken stock





Marinade:

- 3 tsp light soy sauce
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 tsp corn flour / corn starch
- White pepper, to taste
- Sesame oil, to taste

Sauce:

- 2 tsp light soy sauce
- ½ tsp. dark soy sauce
- 1 tsp oyster sauce
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil

Thickening:

- 1 tsp corn flour / corn starch
- 1 Tbsp water

Method:

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the pork mince, ginger, mashed potato, breadcrumbs, mushrooms, Chinese sausage, egg white and marinade. Stir in one direction until springy. Refrigerate for about 25 minutes.

2. Preheat oven to 200°C / 395°F.

3. Remove the pork mince from the fridge. Divide into 5 to 6 equal portions. Shape each portion into a ball between your palms. (Note: Damping your hands with a bit of water will prevent the pork from sticking to your palms.) Spray or brush some oil on surfaces. Bake in the preheated oven for about 15 to 20 minutes, or until the surface goes brown.

4. Transfer the meatballs into a wok or a heavy-bottomed pot. Pour chicken stock and sauce. Bring it to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the cabbage and cook for another 10 minutes, until the meatballs and cabbage are softened. Add thickening and cook to your preferred consistency. Serve immediately.



Notes:

- a) Make up mashed potatoes your own way.
- b) The breadcrumbs and egg white can help pork mince combine well.
- c) You can use a regular oven or pan fry the meatballs instead. If using pan-frying, the meatballs will be flattened a bit along the way of browning all sides. The taste is still good though.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhDdG6WZbZ8>

BACK TO CONTENTS

CLICK HERE

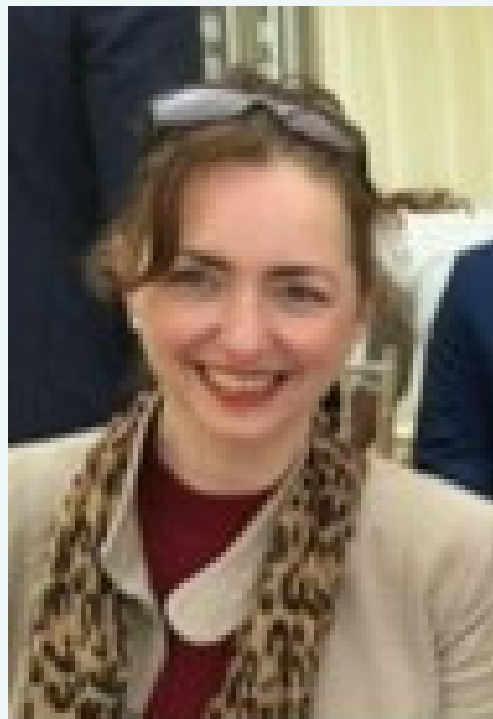
Louise Davidson...The Art of Movement

With three decades dedicated to the art of movement, I consider myself well-versed in the intricacies of this realm. A core belief driving my passion is the profound significance of movement for holistic health and wellbeing. Picture our bodies not as objects but rather as intricate automobiles; our optimal functioning hinges on regular movement. During my extensive training in applied movement neurology, I delved deep into understanding brain function.

Now, I'd like to present a deceptively simple challenge to readers—an avenue to enhance not only our brain function but also improve balance, posture, walking gait, and coordination simultaneously!

Are you up for the challenge?

Embarking on a journey to optimize our daily routines can yield surprising benefits, and here's a unique challenge for you:



Consider brushing your teeth every morning with your non-dominant hand. Beyond the seemingly simple act lies a plethora of advantages that extend beyond oral hygiene.

1. ****Enhanced Brain Function:**** By introducing this change, you engage your brain in a novel task. The brain's neuroplasticity responds positively to such challenges, fostering cognitive flexibility and adaptability.



2. ****Improved Coordination:**** Brushing with your non-dominant hand challenges your coordination skills. Over time, this practice can lead to increased overall dexterity and fine motor control.
3. ****Balanced Muscle Engagement:**** Using your non-dominant hand ensures a more balanced muscle engagement. It promotes equal development of muscles on both sides of the body, preventing imbalances that may arise from habitual actions.
4. ****Mindfulness and Focus:**** This intentional shift in your routine requires heightened attention. Brushing with your non-dominant hand encourages mindfulness, allowing you to be present in the moment and cultivate a sense of focus.
5. ****Subtle Posture Improvement:**** The act of using your non-dominant hand can subtly influence your posture. As you adjust to the new movement, you may find yourself making micro-adjustments that contribute to better overall posture.

Remember, small changes can lead to significant improvements.

Embrace the challenge, and witness the positive impact on both your oral health and your cognitive well-being. Happy brushing, let me know how you get on!

BACK TO CONTENTS

CLICK HERE

Howard Gordon...Rights in 2023

In 2023, disability rights abuses persisted in the United Kingdom. People living with disability, including Dementia, continued to grapple with persistent and alarming instances of disability rights abuses, shedding light on a pressing issue that demands urgent attention and systemic reform.

Despite advancements in awareness and legislation, a significant gap exists between policy promises and the harsh realities faced by people living With Dementia.

One of the glaring challenges is the inadequacy of accessibility measures.

Public spaces, transportation, and digital platforms often fall short of providing reasonable accommodations, restricting the mobility and participation of people living With Dementia.

This neglect perpetuates a cycle of exclusion, limiting opportunities for social engagement and employment. Moreover, the austerity measures and budget cuts implemented in recent years have disproportionately affected people living With Dementia.

Reductions in social services, healthcare, and support systems have left many without the necessary assistance, exacerbating their vulnerability. The lack of proper financial aid and accessible healthcare services further deepens the socio-economic disparities faced by people living With Dementia.

In the realm of employment, discriminatory practices persist, hindering career opportunities for those living With Dementia. Employers frequently fail to make necessary adjustments, perpetuating an environment where disabled individuals are overlooked and undervalued. This not only stifles personal growth and financial independence but also perpetuates societal misconceptions about the capabilities of people living With Dementia.

The UK's legal framework, while ostensibly protective of disability rights, is often criticized for its inadequacy in enforcement. Instances of discrimination and neglect frequently go unaddressed, leaving victims without recourse and perpetuating a culture of impunity.





In order to address these deeply rooted issues, a comprehensive approach is imperative. This includes stricter enforcement of existing laws, increased investment in accessibility infrastructure, and a concerted effort to challenge societal perceptions and biases.

Only through collective action and a commitment to inclusivity can the UK hope to rectify the systemic abuses faced by its people living With Dementia and other disabled persons population in 2024.

BACK TO CONTENTS

CLICK HERE

Michael Cheung...Playing Mahjong and Mild Cognitive Impairment

What is Mahjong (MJ)?

Mahjong or mah-jongg 麻雀 (English pronunciation: /mɑːˈdʒɒŋ/ mah-JONG) is a tile-based game that was developed in the 19th century in China and has spread throughout the world since the early 20th century.

A lot has been written about the origin of Mahjong. As usual with Chinese games; one theory has it that Confucious invented it and mystical histories of hundreds and even thousands of years have been claimed often by western tradesmen keen to impress their potential customers.



All this is very unlikely because the stark truth is that no evidence of the game exists before around 1880. The history of the game is straightforward and can be viewed in two parts - "until the early 1920s" when the game was almost exclusively played by the Chinese and "after the early 1920s" when the game was discovered and immediately popularised by other nations especially in the USA.

The game of Mahjong requires four players, 144 tiles and two or three dice to roll. There are variations in how the game is played from country to country. The goal of mahjong is similar to poker/rummy, in that the aim is to make matching sets and pairs. Generally, we play with 4 people, recently it has been adapted so that 3 or 2 players can play. The goal is to form 4 melds and a pair, creating mahjong. You'll find there are many variations of mahjong, so these rules aren't definitive. I will explain the rules and how to learn to play mahjong in another newsletter.



7 Reasons why you should play Mahjong

1. Fight Alzheimer / Dementia

Experts have been saying for many years now, that playing mahjong on a regular basis can help 'fight' cognitive impairment and slow down brain degeneration. This type of brain games is highly encouraged among the elderly (especially in Asian countries) as they have been seen to improve the memory skills of those who had been living with degenerative brain disorders. Playing Mahjong requires a certain level of memory skills, such as tile setting, game rule and calculation. Playing the game could potentially help to improve our memory.



People playing these games are known to develop better cognitive strength even if they decide to break off playing for as long as a month. It is to no surprise that Mahjong has been found to preserve function and delay decline in elderly individuals with cognitive impairment.

2. Train your mind and patience

For young people, MJ is a great way to sharpen your mind and train your concentration skill. Get away from your repetitive day to day work and start playing MJ could help you make faster decisions and better observations.

3. Stay away from Depression

If you need some distractions from the worries, try to hold a MJ game! It is easy to loosen your mood in the MJ game for a few hours from your worries.

4. Get Socialised and meet new friends

Including you, it requires 3 other players to start a MJ game. This means that playing it requires you to develop social skills. Playing games is an ideal way of socialising with people. It is a brain game paving the way for developing better social relations and taking care of any ill effects arising out of bad memory problems.

Playing MJ is a fun social activity among friends and family. It doesn't matter how old you are, this brain games are sporty enough for everyone! People of all ages can play Mahjong. I learned how to play the game when I was 7. Encouraging children to play Mahjong is giving them an opportunity to enhance their concentration skills. The game is also an excellent child educational option. It develops cognitive skills in all ages and require a person to be calculating, intelligent and make decision on every move with strategy.



No matter if you are winning or losing, there is always laughter from the table.

5. Nurture a new Hobby

It has been proven that keeping a hobby would help reduce stress and promote mental health. Playing MJ keeps your mind engaged and lets you work out new challenges. Create challenges in your MJ games and make use of this healthy hobby.

6. Get an Energy Boost

Sometimes we get exhausted from work and just want to stay in bed during weekends and holiday. MJ is a great activity that makes you get out of your bed and mingle with friends. You will definitely have an energy boost during the MJ game, especially when you get a 'Hu'!

7. Save money and Kill time

Most people go shopping or eating as a form of friends gathering or hang out. A MJ game can actually save you a lot from spending even more at restaurants and shopping temptation. Providing you stay away from Chinese gambling casinos!!



Additional benefits – from recent studies

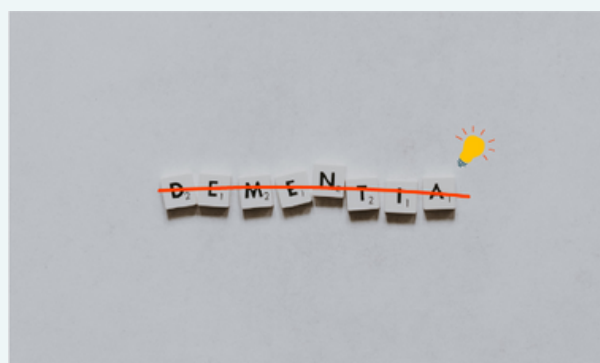
The effects of playing Mahjong on health, particularly on brain function, have been studied. Mahjong has been shown to prevent depression in older adults, improve cognitive performance, such as verbal memory in patients with mild dementia. Playing cards/ mahjong was found to have the therapeutic effects of preserving functioning or delaying decline in specific cognitive domains and decreasing the likelihood of becoming lonely. It has also been found to be a viable treatment option for dementia and is encouraged to be adopted into the routine for the elderly to prevent loneliness as well as to maintain cognitive abilities, especially for those living alone. However, it should be noted that playing cards/mahjong is a special kind of sedentary behaviour.

Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is common among elderly people. So far, effective treatment that can stabilise or reverse the cognitive decline associated with MCI is lacking. Recent studies suggest that playing mahjong may improve attention and memory in elderly people. However, its effect on executive function remains unknown.

Unexpected Health Benefits Of Mahjong Playing Mahjong which can really help to train our brain.

- **Keeps dementia at bay**

Some recent research showed = that Mahjong can help those with MCI in delaying their decline in certain cognitive functions? According to a 2020 study, playing Mahjong may help slow down or reverse the progression of cognitive decline in people with mild cognitive impairment, which is associated with early dementia.



- **Benefits Verbal memory and Forward Digit-Span memory**

There were also multiple studies showing that playing Mahjong actually benefited people with mild to moderate dementia in terms of verbal memory and forward digit-span memory (the ability to repeat a series of numbers).

- **Benefits last even after stopping playing Mahjong**

In fact, playing Mahjong is found to be a demanding cognitive activity and more effective than less-demanding ones such as simple handicraft. The beneficial effects were also found to last even after the participants stopped playing Mahjong for a while!

- **Positive Effects of Mahjong on brain activities in general**

If you are thinking “but I don’t have dementia” don’t worry. Mahjong also can be beneficial for you! Researchers in Japan actually did another experiment in 2014 to evaluate the effect of playing Mahjong for people without dementia. According to them, the results suggested there were potentially positive effects of Mahjong on brain activities in general. It is also an inclusive game that everyone can benefit from!

- **Decrease the possibility of Depression**

Mahjong can help decrease the possibility of depression as it is a form of social interaction. Since you need four people to play a game of Mahjong, this means you also have kakis to talk to about your daily lives or happenings while playing.

Decreases possibility of depression - Researchers have found that by getting involved in activities such as playing Mahjong, being in a sports or social club, or volunteering in the community, people saw an improvement in their mental health. Specifically, people living in urban areas who played Mahjong were also found to be less likely to feel depressed.

- **Improves hand-eye coordination**

Improves hand-eye coordination - Mahjong can help to improve your hand-eye coordination. The game trains the players’ reaction time as they decide which Mahjong tiles they want to keep and discard. Speed and accuracy in matching the patterns of the Mahjong tiles is also important, as there are penalties for players who play the wrong tile and violate the rules of play.



- **Trains concentration and pattern recognition**

In a game of Mahjong, there are over 100 tiles, 3 different suits, and 4 of the same tiles each. There are also miscellaneous tiles such as “flowers” or “animals” that players have to recognise—and they have to do it fast if they want a smooth game. This element of the game hence helps train players’ ability to concentrate and recognise pattern.



More Details

Dancing video games and virtual mahjong keep older adults healthy in old age
<https://youtu.be/1t7Hqs1evdE?feature=shared>

How to Play Mahjong With the Basic Rules (thesprucecrafts.com)
<https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/how-to-play-mahjong-411827>

If anyone wants to learn more about playing Mahjong, do get in touch with me at: michael@deepnessdementiaradio.com

Some References

1. Playing Mahjong for 12 Weeks Improved Executive Function in Elderly People With Mild Cognitive Impairment: A Study of Implications for TBI-Induced Cognitive Deficits

[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7120035>]

2. An exploratory study of the effect of mahjong on the cognitive functioning of persons with dementia

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/7003556_An_exploratory_study_of_the_effect_of_mahjong_on_the_cognitive_functioning_of_persons_with_dementia]



Recipe of the Month

Tofu and Pork Stir Fry

Ingredients

- 200 g ground pork
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon oyster sauce
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon veg. oil.
- 200 g soft tofu, cut into 1-inch slices
- 2 cloves garlic thinly sliced.
- 2 cm piece ginger peeled and thinly sliced.
- 25 ml rice wine
- 1 tablespoon of black bean sauce.
- 1 tablespoon hoisin sauce
- 1 teaspoon chicken powder
- 1 tablespoon light soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 8 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked for 1 hour in hot water, diced. Or use fresh mushrooms.
- 2 spring onions coarsely chopped.
- 1 long green chili thinly sliced.
- ½ green bell pepper, diced.
- ½ orange bell pepper, diced.
- ½ red bell pepper, diced.
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- 2 sprigs coriander

Method

1. In a small bowl, mix together the pork, 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, the oyster sauce and soy sauce, and set aside.
2. Heat a large wok or skillet over high heat until smoking. Add 1/4 cup of the peanut oil and one-third of the tofu slices to the wok and cook until golden brown, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer the tofu to a plate, and then repeat for the remaining tofu.

3. Clean out the wok and place over high heat until smoking. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon peanut oil, the garlic, ginger and pork mixture. Cook until the pork browns, about 4 minutes. Add the rice wine, bean sauce, hoisin sauce, the remaining 1 teaspoon salt, the chicken powder, sweet soy sauce and sugar, and bring to a simmer. Add the mushrooms, scallions, green chiles, orange chiles, green bell peppers, orange bell peppers and red bell peppers, and toss to coat.



4. In a small bowl, mix the corn-starch with 1/4 cup water until smooth, and then add to the wok. Bring the sauce back to a boil and cook until it thickens, about 2 minutes. Add the tofu back to the wok and toss to coat. Lower the heat and cook just until the tofu is warmed through.

5. Serve garnished with the coriander sprigs laid over the top.

BACK TO CONTENTS

CLICK HERE

Teepa Snow...Is Technology leaving the Older Generation Behind?

Whether it's mobile phones, apps, artificial intelligence, banking access, automated grocery checkout, or even appliances, tech companies develop new products and software at a breathtaking rate. Many advances are good, but some inadvertently discriminate against parts of the population or simply have zero practicality.



A few years ago, when I went to purchase a new dishwasher, the salesperson excitingly proclaimed, And this model has Bluetooth!

When I asked what good that does, it was explained to me that one can start the dishwasher while sitting on the sofa. While I consider myself a fairly tech-savvy person, to this day I have not understood how that is a benefit. After all, don't I have to be next to the dishwasher anyway to fill it?

While absurd and useless features seemingly have become more common, what's significantly more alarming is the rate at which a smartphone has become mandatory to navigate today's world.

Now, let me explain:

Yes, smartphones and apps can make a lot of things in life easier, but...only for those that possess a phone and the skills to use it.



According to [an article from AARP from 2020](#), 62 percent of those 70 and older use smartphones, with numbers on the rise. While that is a solid percentage of seniors who are navigating the modern world on their mobile device, what does this number also say?



If you said that 38 percent of seniors aged 70 and over are not using a smartphone, that is correct. And, according to [an article from Pew Research Center from 2021](#), 25% of adults ages 65 and older report never going online at all.

So, I can't help but wonder:

What type of an effect does the constant new development and forced mobile phone usage have on parts of our population? Particularly for those living with dementia?

Again, I want to stress here that technology has brought tremendous benefits. Several members of the [PAC Core Team](#), a group of people living with dementia who partnered with Teepa to help advance mutual understanding and quality of care for all, are using technology to effectively support their day to day.

However, in the tech industry's rush to force a large number of interactions into an app, are we leaving those behind that do not possess a smartphone, or the skills to use it well?

This seemingly unstoppable drive to force everything into an app is not just a U.S. problem, but worldwide. Having recently moved back to Germany, I am frequently appalled how parts of the population are seemingly not being considered.

For example, public transportation is a major part of Germany's endeavor to cut emissions and become a greener country. However, the Deutsche Bahn's (the German national railway company) predominant way of getting a train ticket is via their app or website.

So those without a smartphone or computer, often part of the senior population, are left to hope that they may get lucky and find an open ticket counter (not common in small train stations) or a functioning ticket machine.

To add insult to injury, these ticket machines may be located on a different train track entirely, to which accessibility friendly paths are not available at many stations (no elevators, ramps, etc.). While I know there's awareness about these issues, progress is slow and many, many bureaucratic years away.



Similarly, one of my family members recently received a notification from their bank saying that the only way to access their bank account going forward was via the financial institution's app. In a panic, this family member was going to purchase a smartphone for the mere purpose of still having access to their funds (not possessing any skills to use said phone or install that app).

Fortunately, after some research, I discovered that the old way to access their account will still remain. This information, however, was buried way down on the bottom of the page, where a panic-struck senior may be less inclined to look.

So, web designers (and yes, I am one too): Can we please ensure that non-smartphone alternatives are featured right next to the new app you're trying to promote?!

When you feature a QR code, could you also please add the web address the code is going to?

Now, you may be thinking: Wait a minute. I've used the [Positive Approach to Care website](#) before, and it wasn't that easy to use either.

Yes, our website's user experience has room for improvement. That being said, we are aware, and have a team actively working on improving your experience, no matter your brain state.

But, enough complaining now. I could tell tech-nightmare stories endlessly, but just focusing on what isn't working won't help us move forward.

The truth of the matter is – it all starts with awareness. As they say you don't know what you don't know.

As an example: Years ago, I didn't know that screen readers, a program visually impaired people use to navigate the online world, read aloud an image's ALT text and title tags (which are part of a webpage's code). So, by not including said items, I was unintentionally excluding people who are reliant on such services.

Now that I know better, I try to do better, and also share this type of information with my team.



So, for us techy folks out there:

What can we do to move from *unaware* to *aware*, so that we can then become knowledgeable and competent in making the tech space more accessible for *all*?

I'd say, let's try to put ourselves into the shoes of others more often. Let's try to think of groups that we may not naturally consider, and differing abilities.

Let's reach out, ask questions, and talk to people that are *different* from us.

Even if you *can* do everything in an app, please consider that people exist in this world without such a device, so alternatives are needed and *must* be displayed just as clearly.

Let's try to keep things simple and avoid complexity, so that all people of all abilities have a greater chance of benefiting from our offerings.



Most importantly – let's also consider how we can promote and safeguard human interaction. After all, while tech *can* make things easier for those who are able, it'll never replace a human smile or touch.

And for those of you struggling with tech, please know that there are more and more opportunities to learn and connect with others.

You may consider checking with your local library on whether they offer tech courses of any kind.

Or, you may want to explore the [AARP's OATS \(Older Adults Technology Services\)](#) or free courses at the correlating [Senior Planet](#).

And, if you happen to know of other tips and services to help make tech accessible to all, please share them in the comments down below so more people can benefit.

With that said, I hope that with an increase in awareness comes the desire to do better.



I hope we begin to pay more attention to people with different abilities, and strive to build a world that functions well not just for ourselves, but everyone.

Technology has the vast potential to create a world that offers equal opportunities for all, but only if we're willing to diligently work towards closing the gaps between people of different skills and abilities, and educational and fiscal backgrounds.

If we're able to fly people to the moon, this is a challenge we should be able to overcome, too. Isn't it?!

Resources

[Older Adults Keep Pace on Tech Usage: 2020 Tech Trends of the 50+](#) by Brittne Nelson Kakulla, AARP Research, January 2020

[7% of Americans don't use the internet. Who are they?](#) By Andrew Perrin and Sara Atske, Pew Research Center, April 2021

BACK TO CONTENTS

CLICK HERE

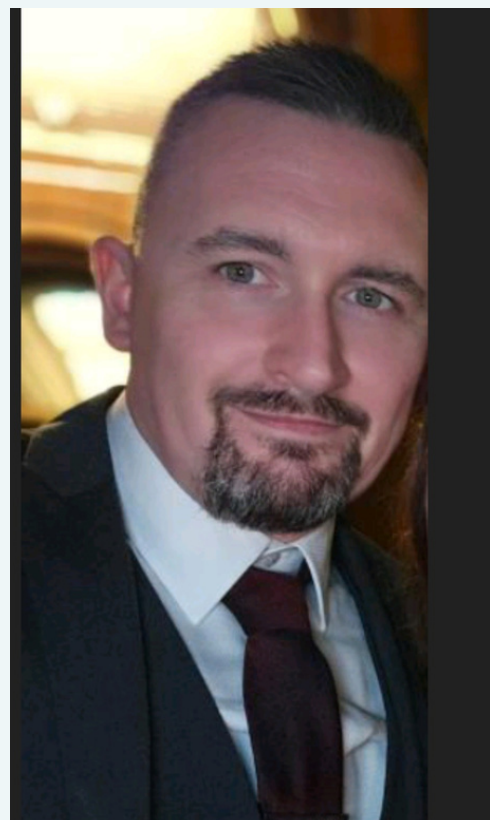
Craig Colligan...Enhancing the mealtime environment for individuals with dementia

Introduction

Dementia is a progressive neurological disorder that affects memory, cognitive abilities, and behaviour. Mealtime can be challenging for individuals with dementia due to the cognitive and physical impairments associated with the condition. However, creating a supportive and engaging mealtime environment can significantly improve their overall well-being and quality of life.

Understanding the Challenges

Individuals with dementia often experience difficulties with eating and maintaining proper nutrition. They may struggle with remembering how to use utensils, recognizing food, or following instructions. Moreover, changes in sensory perception can affect their appetite and ability to taste and smell food. Additionally, the unfamiliar or chaotic mealtime environment can cause anxiety and confusion, leading to decreased food intake and increased mealtime disturbances.



Creating a Calm and Structured Environment

Establishing a calm and structured mealtime environment is crucial for individuals with dementia. Here are some strategies to consider:

1. Clear and Organized Space

Remove clutter and distractions from the dining area to reduce confusion. Ensure adequate lighting and minimize noise levels to create a calm ambiance.

2. Familiarity in Surroundings

Use familiar utensils, plates, and cups that the individual recognizes. Familiarity can provide a sense of comfort and help stimulate their memory.



3. Routine and Schedule

Establish a consistent mealtime routine, including specific times for meals and snacks. This routine helps individuals with dementia anticipate mealtime and reduces anxiety.

4. Visual Cues

Use visual cues like pictures or written instructions to assist with mealtime tasks. Labels on cabinets and drawers can help individuals locate utensils and tableware independently.

5. Supportive Seating

Provide comfortable and supportive seating arrangements, ensuring proper posture and reducing the risk of falls.

Engagement and Socialization

Mealtime should be a social and engaging experience for individuals with dementia. Here are some techniques to promote involvement and socialization:

1. Conversational Prompts

Engage in simple and positive conversations, using open-ended questions to encourage interaction and reminiscence.

2. Multisensory Stimulation

Incorporate various sensory experiences during meals, such as playing soft music, using scented candles, or arranging colourful table settings. These stimuli can enhance appetite and create a pleasant atmosphere.

3. Assistance and Support

Offer assistance when necessary, but encourage independence whenever possible. Provide adaptive utensils and assistive devices to enhance self-feeding capabilities.

4. Family and Caregiver Participation

Encourage family members and caregivers to join mealtime activities. Their presence can provide emotional support and foster a sense of.



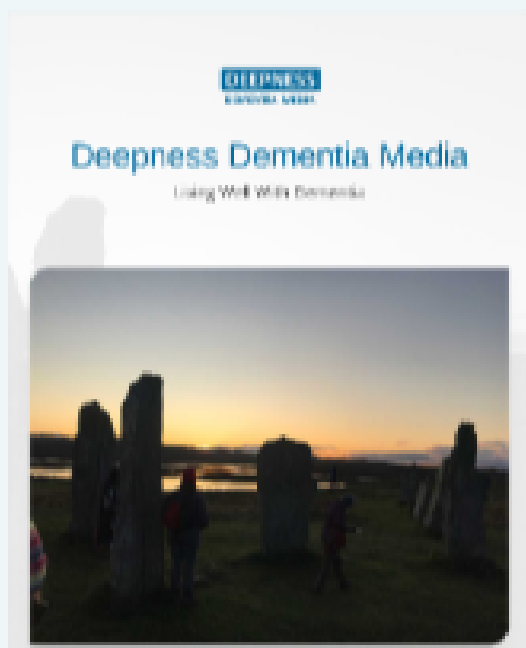
Conclusion

Creating a supportive and engaging mealtime environment is vital for individuals with dementia. By implementing strategies to address their unique challenges, we can enhance their dining experience, improve nutrition, and promote overall well-being. A positive and structured mealtime environment can make a significant difference in the lives of those living with dementia.

Dementia Lead Nurse at Keane Premier Healthcare
and works for Clinical Service Manager at Advinia
Health Care and Bank Registered Nurse at NHS
Greater Glasgow and Clyde
Studied MSc Dementia Studies at University of
Stirling

BACK TO CONTENTS

CLICK HERE



Dementia Media is a platform that gives people tools for living well with dementia designed collaboratively with those with dementia leading the process. By coming together in a supportive, energetic common space makes up a huge difference to the well-being of those going through dementia. As opposed to providing a cure, our goal is to help people become autonomous and get the most out of life. We bring a series of innovative projects - such as our radio station, online education courses, and much more - that use technology and music in a way that keeps people connected and stimulated.

“I didn’t want to die without leaving something for my family to enjoy and remember my strengths,” he says of the thinking behind the EP. “The whole concept was to create something that was a legacy for the person, and as soon as I thought about wanting to do that for myself I knew it was something other people would want to do, to leave our mark on society. It’s almost like leaving our families a gift.”

The Demented Poets EP is on sale now via Bandcamp iTunes and other outlets:

Bandcamp - <https://thedementedpoets.bandcamp.com>

Spotify - <https://open.spotify.com/album/6pngYVybZ3qUf6XMhOOFuK>

Deezer - <https://www.deezer.com/en/album/258048592>

iTunes / Apple Music - <https://music.apple.com/us/album/the-demented-poets-ep/1585080810>

Amazon - <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09FRVYQ1F>