



April 2013

Newsletter No. 61

# Brain Waves



## A monthly newsletter from Innovations in Dementia CIC

The aim of these newsletters is to keep people with dementia and their allies informed about the work of Innovations in Dementia Community Interest Company.

## Circles of Support for people with dementia - project update

A Circle of Support is a group of people who help the person to think about what they would like to do in their life, and then support them to make these things happen.

Find out about some of the initial findings from this project on pages 2 and 3



Circles of Support for People with Dementia

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## Circles of Support for people with dementia - project update

Back in the Brain Waves issue for August 2011, we reported that we'd started a new project called Circles of Support for people with dementia.

A Circle of Support is a group of people who help the person to think about what they would like to do in their life, and then support them to make these things happen.

This is a joint project with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi). We are working with people with dementia in four areas in the South of England to help them develop Circles of Support.

We believe that this is one of the first projects to work in this way with people with dementia in the UK. We want to learn whether this approach can help people to live well and remain connected to communities.



## Some findings from the project so far

### **Working with lots of different organisations**

We started working with one partner organisation in each area. But soon we started to engage with a wider network of individuals, organisations and groups in each area. This has enabled us to promote Circles more widely and encourage more people to get involved.

### **Formal circles of support are often not appropriate**

Circles can be very small - as few as two people. For people with dementia and their carers, asking others (even close family and friends) to join a Circle can seem daunting. The idea of larger 'formal' Circle meetings is not attractive to many people and is often unrealistic.

### **Flexibility is vital**

The pace needs to suit the person at the centre of the Circle and it takes time to develop trust. Everyone's priorities and hopes are different (and often change).

### **Staff can have a vital role**

Traditionally, Circles of Support have a facilitator to help establish the group and focus it on supporting the person. We initially thought that volunteers would take this role on for many Circles, however this role has mostly been carried out by paid staff. Carers or other family members often perform a similar role, however they find that the support of someone with local connections and access to the right sort of information is very useful.

### **Circles take many forms**

Most people we have worked with want to increase their social circles, sometimes through meeting new people or by doing more of the things they used to enjoy such as walking, watching sport and or meeting friends. Introducing people with dementia (and their partners and carers) to others who are in a similar situation or who have shared interests has been very positive. Groups don't always work for people with dementia - especially for some of the men we've worked with.

### **Barriers**

Barriers which stop people with dementia from achieving things they want are very common and we believe these are often caused by fear, stigma and ignorance. Barriers can take different forms, from complete exclusion 'we can't deal with people with dementia here' to the more practical problems associated with people with dementia getting along to a group or activity.

### **Next steps**

We will continue to work with the people already developing Circles and with new people interested in trying this approach. Individual stories will be published on the NDTi website. We will continue to work with new and existing partner organisations to identify how we can develop this approach to best support people with dementia to live well.

### **More information**

You can find out more from Alison Macadam at NDTi

Email: [alison.macadam@ndti.org.uk](mailto:alison.macadam@ndti.org.uk) or telephone: 01202 421480

You can read a full copy of these findings on the NDTi website:

[www.ndti.org.uk/major-projects/circles-of-support-for-people-with-dementia/](http://www.ndti.org.uk/major-projects/circles-of-support-for-people-with-dementia/)



## Valued Voices

Innovations in Dementia has joined forces with the Bath Institute of Medical Engineering (BIME) to start a new venture called Valued Voices.

Valued Voices has been set up to encourage designers, engineers and technologists to listen to the voices of people with dementia.

BIME is an independent charity working to improve the quality of life of children and adults with disabilities and healthcare problems through the use of technology. They do some great work with people with dementia and, like us, have expertise in working with people with dementia in both the design and evaluation of products and services.

Valued Voices is offering companies the opportunity to road test their products or ideas with an expert panel made up of people with dementia, carers and professionals in design.

The road test day is scheduled for Wednesday 11 September 2013 in Bath.

For more information contact Nada ([nada@innovationsindementia.org.uk](mailto:nada@innovationsindementia.org.uk))

The poster is for a 'Road test your product or idea with our expert panel!' event. It features the logos for Innovations in Dementia and Bath Institute of Medical Engineering. The event is on Wednesday 11th September 2013. Three key questions are highlighted in speech bubbles: 'Do you have an idea for people with dementia?', 'Do you already have a product on the market?', and 'Is your product really right for people with dementia?'. The poster lists benefits: a dedicated time slot, a specialist panel, full facilitation, and a business debrief. A 'Complete package £475 plus VAT' is mentioned. The closing date for applications is 31st July 2013. A diagonal banner at the bottom right says 'Limited places available - book your road test now!'.



**Innovations  
in Dementia**

Innovations in Dementia is run by three directors – Rachael, Steve and Nada. We are a Community Interest Company. This means that any profit we make is put back into the organisation.

We do not offer services for people with dementia.

Instead we work with other organisations to make sure that people with dementia can continue to take part in their communities and have active lives.

Please share your ideas, experiences and positive stories with us.

### Contact us

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