Spirituality and Professionals

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QUESTIONS

What is your job?

How long have you worked with people with dementia?

Have you had experience of dementia in your family?

Do you find it easy to “Shut off” from your work?

Can you describe the relationship you have with the family members of the person with dementia?

When you care for a person with dementia, do you experience grief?

How do you cope when a patients with dementia dies?

Questionnaire – professionals continued

How much support do you receive in your work?

What support do you need

What grief experiences have you had in your personal life?
Do you have the opportunity to attend funerals (or other liturgical events) of the people for whom you have cared. Would that be helpful?

Professionals

Many professionals who care for people with dementia, suffer from grief.

Support received from Caregivers

They really love the people . . . They don’t just go “sit over here” that sort of thing. They really do and they don’t seem to have a high staff turnover or anything. Mum’s only been here for a year or a year and a half now and you can still go there and still see the same people.

Asked to describe her relationship with the caregivers, one respondent replied:

Oh, excellent. They’re very approachable and when I go in they say “Hello S, how are you?” They all know my name and yeah they’re . . .we have a great relationship. Yes.

Someone else when asked “Can you describe your relationship with the people here. How do you get on with the caregivers? She responded:

Caregiver comments

Yes, they're short of memory. They can't remember the thinks from the past but they have forgotten very easily. Like the short term memory. Like their behaviour – they repeat themselves. Most of the time they are confused because they can't work out what they need and what they want . . . .Like if they want to go to the toilet sometimes, they become agitated and more aggressive. . . .They don't know what they need.

One perceptive comment was:

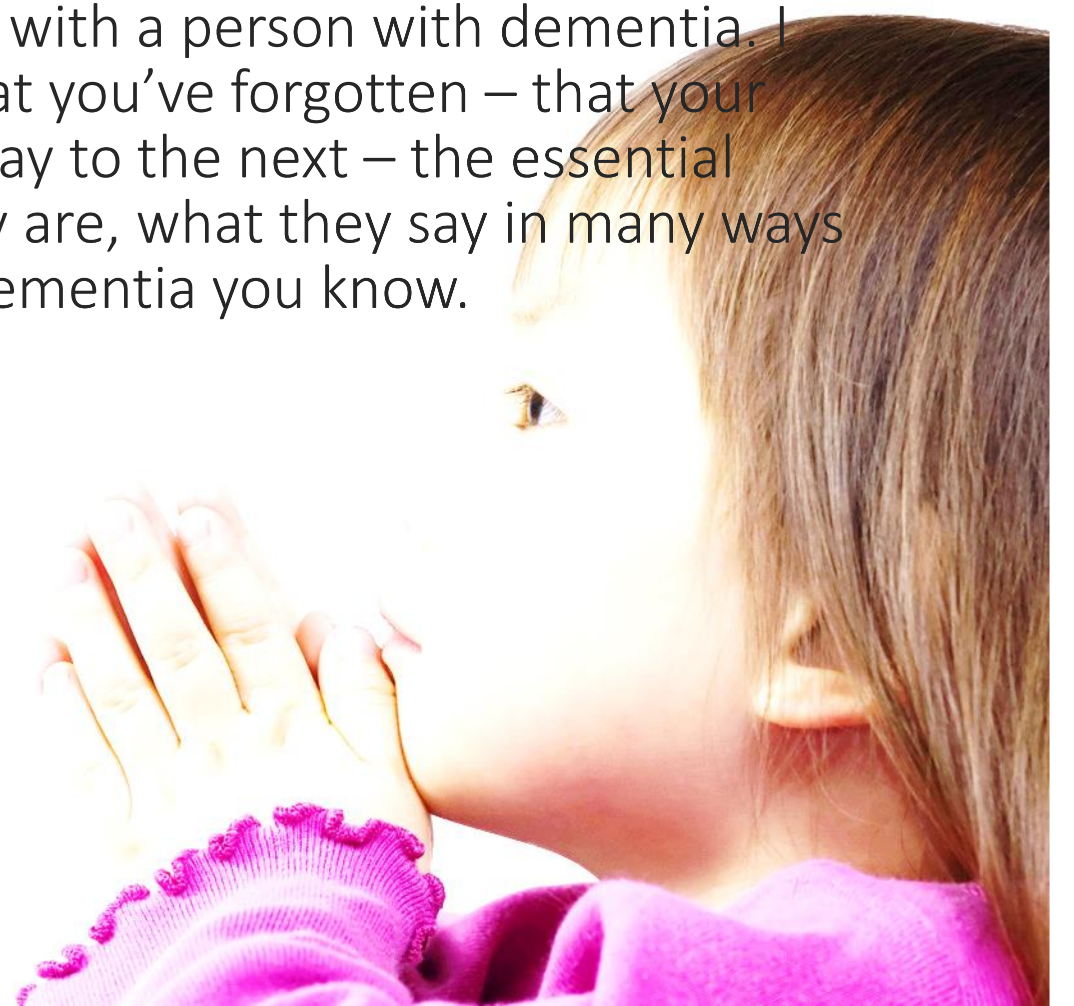
No . . .I wouldn't know. It's hard but it's like everything – everything's labelled isn't it? It's like if you go to a doctor – though mine wouldn't say that to me – It's a virus. So I'm sure dementia must have just been labelled. It must have gone on for years and years. . .I think that everyone with dementia can be categorised too much.

Explanations

I'm not sure how to explain it to myself. Well, I see it as a very sad disease process and that robs people of so much – I mean losing their memory and forgetting their family and I think people need a lot of support to cope with that and I like to try to make a difference to people who are experiencing that.

Spirituality

. . .it’s a spiritual level on which you are connecting with a person with dementia. I believe your spirit is there and it doesn’t matter that you’ve forgotten – that your memory’s gone or you can’t remember from one day to the next – the essential person is still there and that comes out in who they are, what they say in many ways and I think that’s what I’ve always thought about dementia you know.



Relationships

I haven’t my parents any more but I love them (these people) I love them but it’s not the same as with your parents though. I look at most of the residents and I . . .they’re parents to me. . .they’re my parents so that’s the caring I’ve got for them – certain ones. Some of them are really agitated and that’s hard . . . otherwise I see them as my parents.