

## Evaluation of 2-day training course for RYCTT

### Trainee 01 - Liv

**1. What was your main reason for wanting to join this course?**

*Develop my creative reminiscence skills and practice*

**2. In what ways did the course meet your needs and expectations?**

*I really wanted some fresh ideas for creative reminiscence, having worked in the field for a couple of years now. It certainly provided me with fresh impetus, ideas, and other art forms to explore. It also gave me some ideas for when I run my own training, and fantastic exercises for helping people understand dementia. It also provided an excellent opportunity for networking and developing creative ideas with other artists working in the same field as me. The course met my expectations, but they were high expectations, so that is a very good thing!*

**3. Were there any ways in which it did not meet these needs and expectations?**

*I can't think of any.*

**4. Which parts of the course were particularly relevant or significant for you?**

*It was all relevant to me. The aspect that was particularly significant was exploring other art forms; although I have started to work in a cross-arts way through other projects, it is always good to get fresh ideas. I am not a natural visual artist or dramatist, so it is great to gain practical and useful ideas in a 'non-academic'/non-jargon way. It has increased my confidence and skills in these areas and encouraged me to explore and learn more.*

**5. Were there any particular issues which were not covered by the course?**

*I would be interested for it to include creative music-making as a reminiscence tool...I obviously understand this is quite a niche area, and is tricky to manage with large groups of people. And also, it would need to be tried and tested first! This is more of a wish-list than a specific request! Other than that, I think the course was incredibly comprehensive.*

**6. How did the course relate to your previous work experience?**

*I come from a music background, firstly performance then community music, and I also work as a project-worker for Age Exchange – in creative reminiscence. The course is an extension of my work in the last 2.5 years, and relates perfectly to where I see myself in the future.*

**7. How has it added to your experience/awareness?**

*It was just so exciting to be in a room with other artists who were passionate about what they do and who all seemed to 'get' the work that Pam has pioneered. I will take away the ideas to use in other projects beyond RYCT, and the training has also provided me with fantastic contacts for future work and projects.*

**8. What are your hopes for future work in this area?**

*I would love to be involved with the future development and dissemination of the project, to carry on the work that Pam has pioneered and raise the profile of creative reminiscence in the community music sector.*

**9. Any further comments?**

*Incredible training – best one I've been on for a while! I'm very excited and feel very privileged to have been accepted onto the course. Thank you to everyone involved, and I can't wait to start with the project.*

**Trainee 02 - Kate**

**1. What was your main reason for wanting to join this course?**

*I wanted to do this course because my ultimate career ambition is to get paid to provide group work to older people with dementia. I ran a reminiscence group for people with dementia in a hospital setting as part of my social work training and subsequently worked for Alzheimer's Society running a peer support group for people with dementia but I am keen to gain more recent experience since I left that job 3 or 4 years ago and am trying to get back into the groupwork field.*

**2. In what ways did the course meet your needs and expectations?**

*The course was very practically-based which I had not expected, and which made it far more enjoyable as a learning experience. Practically doing so many exercises really helped me to understand the methods for helping older people with dementia to remember and I liked the ideas of drawing memories, improvising/dramatizing memories as well as the techniques we learnt for not questioning people in a threatening way.*

**3. Were there any ways in which it did not meet these needs and expectations?**

*It was a brilliant training course so it did not fail to meet any of my needs and expectations. I would perhaps have liked a little more on techniques for helping people remember, like how actually you can get people to share memories when they are sitting in a big group with 30 people if you are not meant to ask them questions as these could appear threatening. Like is it OK to say, "would anyone like to share a memory about holidays?" and if you notice one person hasn't said anything is it ok to say, "And what about you, John, did you ever go to the seaside?"*

**4. Which parts of the course were particularly relevant or significant for you?**

*I think the most relevant parts were the very practical bits such as the different techniques for using the arts like drawing/theatre/music/being playful together to help people with dementia to remember. From my experience of groupwork, I often found more vocal/able group members would monopolise so I liked the idea of splitting into smaller groups and having so many volunteers to help prevent the carers talking over their cared-for people.*

*I also liked the ways we practiced bad/good communication as a contrast. The exercise when we talked over the “person with dementia” or “outpaced” him/her followed by trying to encourage the person to reminisce I found to be particularly powerful. I would have liked more opportunity to role play helping a “person with dementia” to reminisce.*

**5. Were there any particular issues which were not covered by the course?**

*No, there was nothing that I could think of that was missed out. Maybe we could have done a groupwork role play when some people were playing people with dementia and the others had to try to get them to share memories.*

**6. How did the course relate to your previous work experience?**

*Extremely well. I have previous experience of running groups with people with dementia, so all the time I was imagining how the techniques I was learning were working could be applied to a group such as the ones I have used before. I have read several books on Reminiscence Therapy as well as Dementia Reconsidered by Tom Kitwood so this also informed my thinking and reflection on the course.*

**7. How has it added to your experience/awareness?**

*The course has added a lot to my experience/awareness by teaching me techniques for helping older people to remember. I practically got the chance to try out how much fun reminiscing could be on a personal level and I can't wait to try it out in the Apprenticeship course and see reminiscence working in action.*

**8. What are your hopes for future work in this area?**

*My dream would be to get paid to run groups with older people with dementia (I found one job where I got to run a group once a month, but it was not specifically for the purpose of reminiscence). I am hoping that the experience that I will gain from helping to co-facilitate the Remembering Yesterday Caring Today groups will help me in any future job interviews or may even lead to other work. I entered Social Work to make a difference in the lives of older people, but I find the amount of paperwork and bureaucracy and the lack of time to actually build meaningful relationships with clients (especially those living with dementia, who would benefit from a slower approach) very frustrating so I would love to be able to do something more*



*concrete to make a difference to older people with dementia.*

**9. Any further comments?**

*I am looking forward to the Apprenticeship a great deal and would like to say a huge thank you to Pam – working with you is an enormous privilege, you are such a role model to me as someone who has devoted her career to the field I would like to work in.*