Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today (RYCT)

Reminiscing with people with dementia and their family carers: a project created by the European Reminiscence Network, refined and developed over 17 years by many others.
A Pilot Project 1997-9

- Austria
- Belgium
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Sweden
- U.K.
A manual of best practice from across all European RYCT projects, published 1999, now translated into six languages.
German and Italian translations
Danish, Dutch. Spanish & Catalan editions have also been produced.
On-going research & evaluation
2000-2010

- Studies in many EU countries
- UK randomised control trials over many years with varying results, mainly positive
- Massive support from anecdotal evidence
- Research and evaluation in the UK supported by Medical Research Council, Department of Health, charities, companies
Best Practice Manual published for ‘Remembering Yesterday Caring Today’ groups

Manual by Pam Schweitzer & Errollyn Bruce: Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today: Reminiscence in Dementia Care: a guide to good practice

Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2008 with support from the Medical Research Council
Remembering Together (RTRT)  
2010-2012

• A new project based on RYCT for families living with dementia  
• An arts element to be added and tested in each country including an end-product  
• Supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the EU
Partners agree to share common principles and methods

• We hold a series of sessions following the life course of people with dementia and their carers
• We use reminiscence and creative approaches to help everyone express themselves
Creative reminiscence methods

- Use of objects
- Use of photographs
- Improvised drama
- Music and dance
- Singing together
- Cooking
- Drawing / painting
- Writing
- Dressing up
- Memory Boxes
- Practical activities
Meetings to share our findings
www.rememberingtogether.eu
“Art was used in every session. Music, objects, pictures, drama, drawing... This helped people remember more and more vividly, made the memories visible and stimulated conversation and communication.”

Finland
“Creative activity gives a space for individual expression, for communication of immediate feelings in the ‘here and now’. It does not require strict intellectual and logical thinking”

“Capturing emotions, attitudes, feelings, bringing facts and knowledge to the surface, using emotional memory and expressing the values of the individual person”

“It is very touching that we can remember our childhood and families”
“The family carers discovered old photos, diaries, pictures, documents and other things and how useful these things could be in improving the quality of the care they could give to their relatives.”

“They felt joy when they discovered that something they had seen working in the group situation of the sessions could also work at home.”

Czech Republic
“Volunteers realized that people with dementia could be active – at least in certain situations – much more active than they had thought”

“Volunteers became more creative and more daring in how they interacted with persons with dementia”

Germany
“I felt great that I have laughed so much with my wife. She doesn’t laugh at home anymore.”

“Taking care of my husband has become less burdensome. I am less afraid for the future.”

“It is inspiring and it is a way to keep memories alive. It is a good way to work together (the carer and the person with dementia).”

“The best way to reminisce is doing things instead of only talking.”
Overall project statistics of RTRT: Reminiscence arts in dementia care

- Number of reminiscence arts sessions 256
- Number of families attending sessions 226
- Number of workers delivering sessions 73
- Number of volunteers supporting sessions 82
Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today Training (RYCTT) 2012-14

- A 2-year project with 8 EU partners and 4 associate partners introducing a common training and apprenticeship scheme
- 362 people have taken the 2-day training course
- 146 people have undertaken extended apprenticeships
- 250 families have been involved in the project
Apprentices build skills on the project
They build relationships too
Drawing memories: apprentices bring their own arts skills into reminiscence work
They enjoy having fun and being creative with the families and volunteers.
They help to create a party-like relaxed atmosphere
Significant photos remind couples of the centrality of their relationship
We celebrate together these long-term relationships through re-enactment of key family events such as weddings and christenings.
Group Enactments and celebrations
Plenty of spontaneity
Handling familiar objects from the past
Past competence revisited and demonstrated with the help of props
Music and dancing

- Dance gives hand and eye contact, familiar rhythms and tunes and remembered steps
- People regain a sense of rhythm and movement and enjoy dancing together
Singing familiar songs together
Singing and playing old favourites
Re-enacting familiar rituals

Asian Elders in London try reminiscence drama
Making a joint art-work
Hello, it's Prem speaking.
Born in South Africa, beautiful place, so sunny, full of flowers, it's nature's bless.
Loved my husband, he was a photographer.
So many memories, we were very happy together.
Cooking, enjoy family life and slowly going grey.
For peace and good life, go church and pray.
Making a Memory Box together
Overall statistics of RYCTT 2012-14

- Number of families attending reminiscence sessions 250
- Number of people attending our 2-day training course 362
- Number of apprentices completing 4-6 month course 146
- Number of international meetings and conferences: Perpignan, Prague, Poznan and London 4
• Explore non-verbal forms of communication

• Allow more time, listen well and “reflect back” what people have said to encourage and support them

• Wherever possible include one-to-one and small group working, as well as work with the whole group

RYCT essentials
• Choose themes of common interest where everyone can contribute stories

• Explore the theme through a variety of approaches & stimuli

• Have plenty of thematically related reminiscence objects to handle

• Use drama, music, dance, drawing, painting, writing, cooking, anything in fact, so there are opportunities to try new things in each session
reminiscence themes

Session 2: 14th Oct 03

CHILDHOOD & ORIGINS

Session 7: HOMES, GARDENS & ANIMALS

HOME & GARDENS

Session 9: HOLIDAYS

Dear Nandha,

I'm having a super time in Malaysia. It's really warm and humid. Most days we spend swimming in the sea and soaking in the sun. And there's a local ice tea that we just love so much.

Hope you're having a great time too! Enjoy your holidays.

Love,

Keira
The future of reminiscence in dementia care

- Further applications will be lodged with the European Commission and with Partners’ national bodies.

- We wish to extend the pilot Training and Apprenticeship scheme and expand the take-up across Europe and beyond.
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www.europeanreminiscencenetwork.org

www.rememberingtogether.eu

www.pamschweitzer.com