

**Alzheimer's  
Society  
'Lift the Lid'  
on the sex and  
intimacy needs  
of people living  
with dementia  
in care homes**

Innovation Sprint

Michelle Davies



## Innovation Team



Natasha Morgan, Tim Shakespeare, Simon Lord  
Michelle Davies, Natasha Howard, Carolyn Goble

Team members with our Good Innovation partners  
John Gunn, Ryan Bromley and Magda Lechowicz



## Innovation Sprint Challenge

How can we better support care  
home staff when it comes to the  
sex and intimacy needs of residents  
living with dementia?





## Innovation Team Sprint from December 2017 to November 2018

- Desk research
- Conversations with 20 stakeholders and experts.



- Interviews with 37 people who might use our solution, including care staff and people affected by dementia
- Visiting six care homes



- Workshop involved 23 stakeholders to develop possible solutions
- Two solutions presented to a Dragons Den panel
- Prototypes of the two solutions taken to six care homes for further development



- Minimum viable product tested in 10 care homes
- Product launched in November 2018



## Five key insights...

1. I never really thought of my residents' sex and intimacy needs before. I need to understand why they are important and should be considered.

2. When it comes to sex and intimacy and residents with dementia I worry what I'll see, how I'll feel and what I do

3. I wanted to do the right thing for my residents with dementia, but there isn't clear and consistent guidance on how to navigate the area of sex and intimacy.

4. I know very little about my residents with dementia when it comes to sex and intimacy. I want to understand their individual needs to provide them with better care, but don't know how to broach the subject.

5. I know my residents with dementia often lack closeness and companionship. I try to do the best I can but there's only so much I can do.

# **We identified three stages on the journey to better support for residents' sex and intimacy needs**



## **Be Aware**

seeing sex and intimacy as a rights based element of residents' lives and identity and a contributor to wellbeing and person centered care

## **Get equipped**

having the confidence and processes in place to begin conversations and manage situations in a respectful and dignified way

## **Boost support**

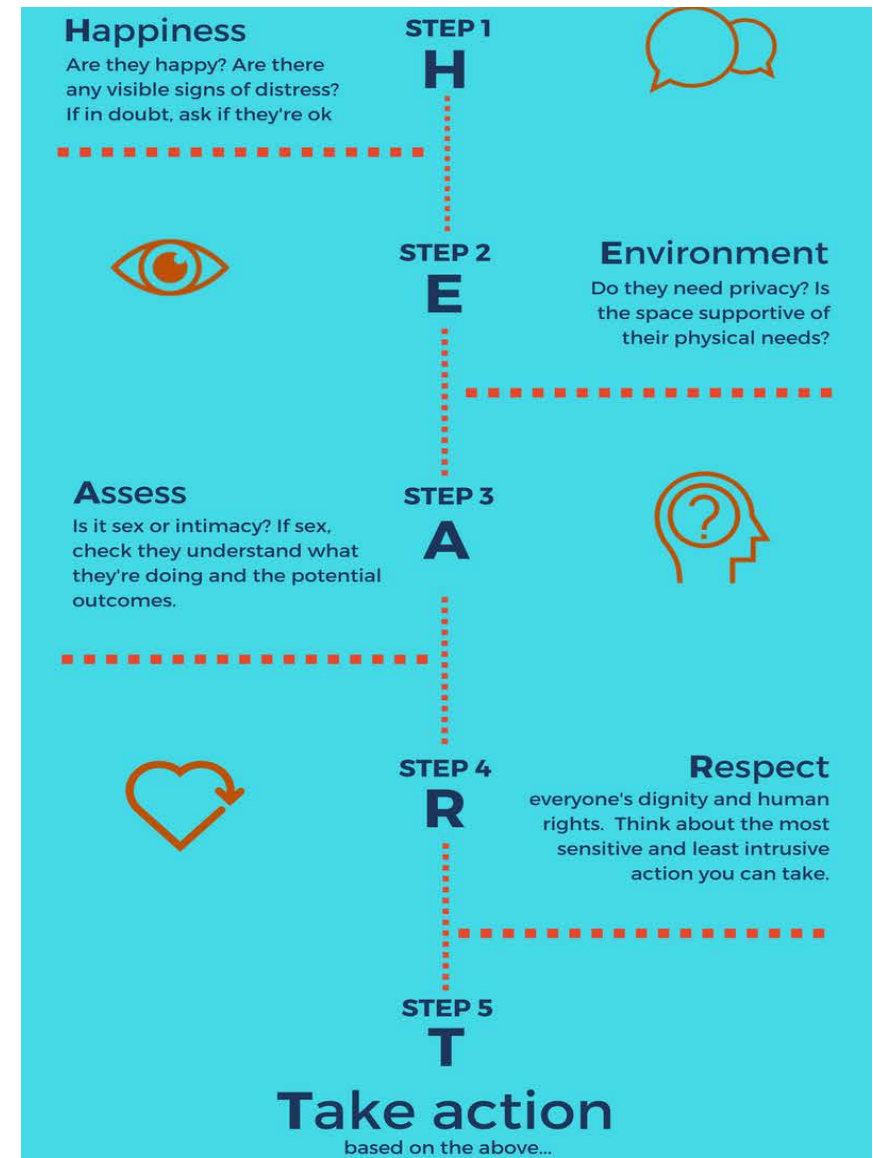
proactively supporting residents with the backing of shared values and agreed actions

# Flow HEART

A practical, engaging framework, shining a light on the respectful support of residents with dementia when it comes to sex and intimacy.

It helps staff understand best practice in this area and empowers them to provide quality, person-centred.

Whenever sex and intimacy are at the forefront, follow the HEART.





# Lift the Lid

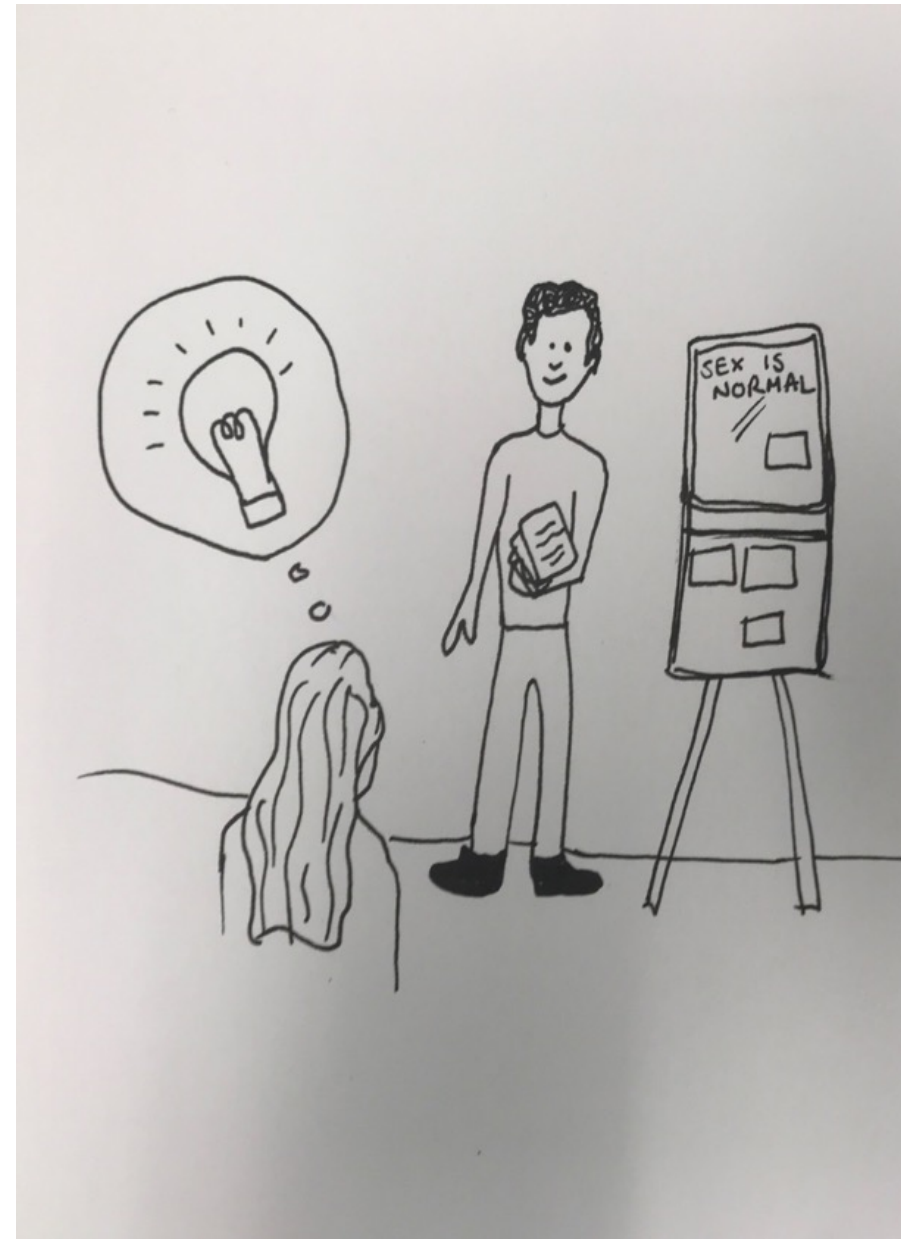
Allowing care home staff to co-create and align on a consistent set of values and internal culture in relation to sex, intimacy and relationships in respect of the rights, needs and wishes of residents who are living with dementia.

This workshop covers three modules:

Challenging Perceptions, Co-Creating Values, Embedding New Culture.

You can run a complete 2-3 hr long session or break it into 3 parts lasting 30-45 mins each. Everything you need to facilitate your session is in the box: including an agenda and all activities and prompts.

By using and implementing your new sex and intimacy policy, your team will feel confident in demonstrating holistic person-centred care and best practice within CQC's key lines of enquiry pertaining to relationships, equality and diversity.





Rebecca Jarvis

Health Innovation Network

Michael Dent

Head of Fundraising

Angela Clayton-Turner

Research Network Volunteer

Helen Quinn

Knowledge team

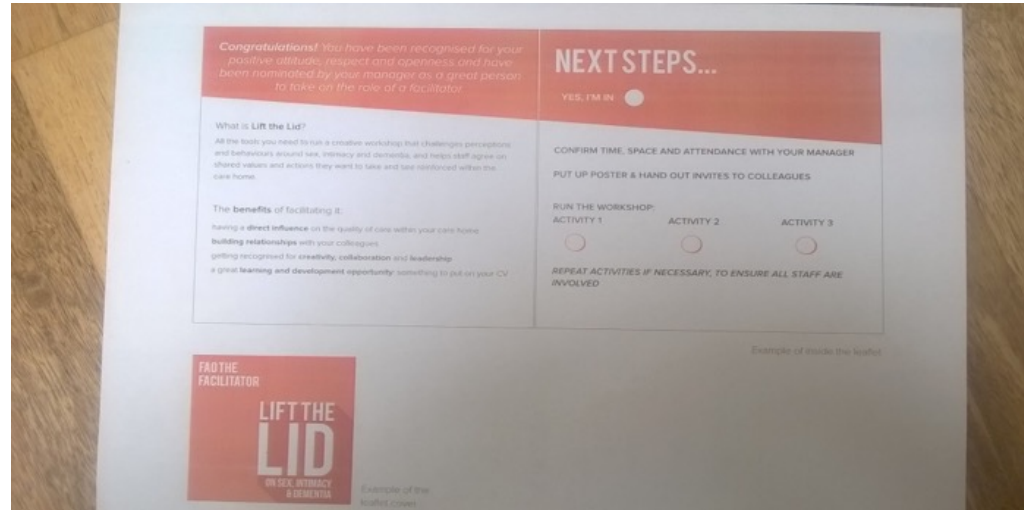
Joanne Howcroft

Dementia Lead  
Quality and Compliance  
BUPA

**Our Dragon's Den**



# The two solutions became one ....



We tested early prototypes of the two solutions to find which was preferred in the real world setting, and heard:  
'The ideas go hand in hand, each offers a vital bit that would otherwise be missing in the other...can we combine them?'

Pictured: BUPA staff checking out the follow your heart poster and facilitator guide for Lift the Lid



# Lifting the Lid on Sex and Intimacy

10 care homes were involved in the next phase of testing

Pictured: staff from Orders of St Johns Trust and Four Seasons Health Care







## Feedback visits made to all care homes involved .....



This innovation has been tested in the real world. Feedback on design, content and impact gathered to inform **prototype to product** development.



# The product we developed

- A workshop in a box
- Activity One: Challenges perceptions
- Activity Two: A framework for respectful, rights based management of 'in-the-moment' situations
- Activity Three: Aligns shared values and actions



# Who is this for?

- All staff members irrespective of seniority or role, working in care or nursing homes
- Particularly valuable for care homes where residents are living with dementia but can easily be applied more broadly





## Helping care homes to normalise the taboo



**‘Lift the lid on sex and intimate relationships normalises a conversation that is needed but kept hidden, it is an important part of our residents lives. The activities in the box give staff an understanding, ability and confidence to respond in an appropriate and respectful manner, and to not react out of embarrassment and fear – this should be about dignified care and this will help us to provide that’. Jessica, Unit manager at Bupa**

Care Home and group	How likely are you to recommend to other care homes?
Apple Trees : St Johns Trust	10/10. Already have done at St Johns homes managers meeting.
Sunny view : Bupa	10/10. Very easy and accessible - does what it says on the tin/box. Staff are representative of a range of cultures, background and experience everyone has taken something from it that will better support our residents needs.
Collingwood Grange : Bupa	Definitely - I'm all for it. Really nice exercises, concise and appropriate. I feel I could present it to a multi disciplinary team and I will think about it with relatives.
Thatcham Court : Bupa	Yes, would definitely recommend and you can learn from it. There is always grey areas, good to have more black and white. It's a very good clarification tool to use to help you feel more comfortable with dealing with situations.
Ashcroft House : Four Seasons Health care	10/10. We were reluctant at first having never discussed this as a staff team before - I would say to others that it will make you think of things never even thought of before - gave confidence to speak about relationships and has put us on the right track for our residents.
Ashbourne House : Four Seasons Health Care	It needs highlighting – yes it's ok to have these discussions and yes it's ok for these relationships to happen. I think it's good for the staff because this home is supposed to be a home from home environment.



Denise,  
Home Manager ,  
Orders of St Johns  
Trust

Be brave and Lift The Lid – it's right to do this, people need us to do this! Couples may think that romance, sex, intimacy and their relationship is out of bounds when one partner is living in a care home and we do nothing now to support them to think otherwise – this has opened my eyes!

*Care Home Manager*



**Up to February 2020 we have received 183 orders for Lift the Lid across England, Wales, Scotland and Australia.**

**Majority are care home sales, other buyers include extra care providers, community services provider, specialist memory services, Community Mental Health Teams, several Councils, Universities and NHS teams.**

**By researching the sizes of the care home groups who have ordered Lift the Lid, we are aware of a potential reach into over 700 care homes.**





## In practice...

Lift the Lid was piloted in house by Sunrise Senior Living and Gracewell Healthcare, across 5 of their sites within the South of England from July 2019.

'Sunrise and Gracewell are committed to supporting team members to act appropriately when faced with sex and intimacy needs and to positively support residents with dignity and respect.'

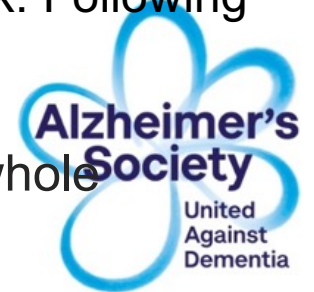
In addition to implementing Lift the Lid, they developed the following:

- Policy on Sex and Intimacy
- Chart to support appropriate decision making
- Care home team member resource delivery programme

The invited sites attended a workshop to enable them to review and gain feedback. Following this the Deputy Managers cascaded the information at their sites via 2 workshops

October 2019 - Following the trial, reviewed feedback before launching to the whole business.

By December 2019 — all sites in the process of cascading to their teams



## **Sunrise Senior Living and Gracewell Healthcare**

**October 2019** - Following the trial, reviewed feedback before launching to the whole business.

**December 2019** – All sites began the process of cascading to their teams

### **Expected outcomes:**

Confident and competent team members

Improvements in resident support and care - Quality of life & well being

Less inappropriate referrals to safeguarding & family involvement

Good working relationships with regulators and external professionals – hope to be seen as ‘leading the way.’





Awards ceremony in Toronto in October 2019 with partners Good Innovation, we were awarded the winner of the professional non-profit category at the international Service Design Awards, run by the Service Design Network.

Lift the Lid was recognised along with 11 other projects across the categories as representing 'the international benchmark for world-class service design'.

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## Do you want to Lift the lid on sex, intimacy and relationships ?

This **workshop in a box** was launched in November 2018 at the UK Dementia Congress and is now available to order for £38.

Visit the online shop **[shop.alzheimers.org.uk](https://shop.alzheimers.org.uk)** or call **0300 124 0900** (local rate).

**[innovation@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:innovation@alzheimers.org.uk)**



Thank you

