Persons with dementia “are given a voice” when music and singing are included as part of their everyday life

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Music and togetherness

Lyrics: Aase Marie Ottesen

The music creates an environment
And when we sing together
So you can join
We gather in the wonderful place of the music

When we sing and play together
A spiritual form of brotherhood
For all people on this globe
All people in the globe
The same moon, the same sun and the same
All the people in the globe

The music can touch
And when we sing
In the wonderful place of the music
In the wonderful place of the music

The project contains three parts, which in addition to involve the perspective from the person with dementia and their relatives, also have focus on an professional, an interdisciplinary, an intersective perspective and an organizational perspective aimed at the conditions for implementation of singing and music in the rehabilitation efforts persons with dementia.

Four institutions in Denmark participate.

REFERENCES:


ATTENTION POINTS:

• The choice of methodology must be person-adjusted
• Involvement of person with dementia and their relatives must contribute to they feel valued, included and ultimately heard (Elstad & Eide 2009)
• Involvement can be practiced when it is adapted to the individual
• The person involved must be provided with the sufficient and essential preconditions and must be supported to fulfill their role (Parkes et al. 2014)
• The researcher must recognize a plurality of knowledge forms (Thorgård 2012)
• The ethical, moral and legal code must always be in focus and guide the researcher

THE RESEARCH PROCESS:

1. Researcher meets the persons with dementia through the field studies

The persons with dementia has the potential and they are keen to make their voices heard and to talk about their experiences

2. Agreements are made with the persons, who wants to be involved in the research process

Informed consent be obtained from the participants

3. The first workshop: A creative process based on the theme: What does the music give you in your everyday life? What importance does the music have for you?

The persons with dementia composes jointly a song with 4 verses – the music therapist facilitates the process, in collaboration with the researcher and the team member

4. Cafe meeting: Dialogue with the persons with dementia and their relatives

New perspectives comes up

• My wife tells all the time about the song she was involved in composing – it meant a lot to her
• Music can help to rediscover and refresh good memories from the life together - before the disease
• Little by little and enjoyment together, provides to start dancing as in our young days - we get closer to each other again
• I see the spark of life in my husband’s eyes again - just like when we were young together
• When my husband comes home after a day where singing and music have been the setting for the community, he is full of energy and joy. It rubs off on our everyday life together

5. The second Workshop: The themes: "togetherness about music and good memories" coming up at the cafe meeting, formed the joint starting point

The persons with dementia were very excited, had a lot of energy and wished to continue composing more verses to the song – they composed jointly further five verses to their song – the music therapist facilitates the process, in collaboration with the researcher and the team member

6. The song leads to new perspectives and ideas

• The persons with dementia often sings the song together, which provides a breeding ground for positive memories and new processes
• There is a desire conveying the song to others - for example at a concert or conference
• There is interest in developing the song with several verses - e.g. from the theme: How can music help us through the life that lies ahead of us?