



Dementia Friends in Japan

Dementia Awareness Week Conference

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Overview

- Beginnings
- Developments
- The picture now...
- Next steps
- Learning opportunities

Beginnings

- Stigma and ignorance
- Name change
- Raise public awareness
- Dementia friendly communities
- Dementia Friends – key to achievement



Developments (1)



- Dementia Friends started in 2005 – government funded
- ‘pyramid selling’ model – but with nicer people!
- 2 pathways: co-partnership with local councils
or ‘in-house’ within businesses
- Both pathways develop Dementia Champions
who create Dementia Friends

Developments (2)

- Who can become Dementia Friends?
 - all comers welcome
- Dementia awareness-raising sessions
 - mandatory gateway
- Understanding into action
 - what Dementia Friends can do next
- Quality improvement of sessions & dissemination of best practice
 - vital for sustainability

The picture now... (1)

- 2008 1m Dementia Friends target reached
- Now 6m Dementia Friends
 - 105,000 are Dementia Champions
- 2018 8m Dementia Friends target
- 6m DFs = 4.6% of Japan's 127m population
- Now 5m with dementia
- 2025 7m with dementia (1 in 5 over-65s)

The picture now... (2)

Who are Dementia Friends in Japan?

- 95% – community 5% – businesses
- 2/3 are women
- 60% are aged 50+
- 1.4m are aged 70+
- Teens make up 15 %
- Regional variables – 1% to 60% of the population are DFs

Next steps (1)

What Dementia Friends actually do?

- Remove stigma & strengthen positive attitudes
- Wish to do more ... practical help
- Dementia Champions and local councils provide opportunities – mainly collective
- Build on existing networks & generic services and skill-up for Dementia Friends

Next steps (2)

Hybrid model = local councils + private company

- Read meters, connect utilities and take payments
- All workforce are Dementia Friends
- 1,200 workforce make face-to-face contact with customers: especially people with dementia
- Workers
 - communicate sensitively
 - follow a check-list
 - look out for tell-tale signs
 - report their concerns

Next steps (3)

Multi-purpose task force

- After skill-up sessions Dementia Friends join:
 - befriending ‘buddy bank’ networks
 - ‘reassurance visits’ networks
 - volunteering for community & carers’ groups
- Some Dementia Friends form their own groups:
 - exercise club or informal meeting spaces
- Skill-up sessions = confidence, competence & friendship

Next steps (4)

SOS Wanderers Network

- SOS Wanderers Network = neighbourhood watch *style*
- Purpose: care for neighbours with dementia who wander
- Action: Dementia Friends support coordinated search
- SOS covers 60% of Japan, using low-cost community resources
- In 2014, 10,322 wanderers missing with 388 found dead
- SOS slogan: 'It's OK to wander...go and wander...it's natural for people with dementia to do so... we'll come and find you...and get you home safely...'

Learning opportunities?

- Dementia sessions – quality & interaction
- Support for Dementia Friends to take ‘actions’
- Keys for developing concerted actions
 - leadership from Dementia Champions & local councils
 - Co-partnership with existing networks & groups
- SOS approach: low-cost community resources & high yield

Thank you

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