

Invitation for expressions of interest from dementia care operators

[Please contact me to discuss possible participation in further trialling this program]

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Shortage of entertainment 'diversion therapy' in dementia care environments needs our attention:

It can be widely evidenced world-wide that:

- Most people with dementia welcome entertainment, particularly when it is musically oriented, to occupy their time, but they often experience great difficulties when concentrating on the content of long movies or similar entertaining presentations, although many can still respond very favourably to short appealing entertainment, and when the content played can have direct appeal through recall and reminiscence of their own past enjoyments;
- Without having enjoyable entertainment to help pass the long empty hours each day, many people with dementia easily become bored and frustrated; this can often lead to aggressive behaviour often leading to demands being unnecessarily placed upon carers/staff, all of which can create distressing issues with which operators will then have to cope, and often forced to take ongoing steps to address;
- In many instances very little time and/or qualified staff are available to allow operators to be able to analyse each of their client's entertainment 'likes', let alone have in-house expertise and time/equipment to then prepare and regularly change tailored programs to suit the likes of each of their clients;
- Most people with dementia sooner or later experience a diminishing of any previous ability to be able to operate technology-based devices so they can only switch on/off the simplest possible technology to enable them to entertain themselves inside their own lounge or bed rooms.

A helpful solution:

Young At Heart have created an 'entertainment' style diversion therapy program, together with suitable audio-visual equipment used to present the program. After preliminary testing *Young At Heart* believes its use will enhance the entertainment needs of those with dementia who may live either within a care facility or at home.

Besides being an ongoing benefit to their wellbeing the use of the program may possibly provide operational cost savings to a facility operator because by having pre-prepared entertainment available for on-going presentations, that could conceivably release present staff for other care work.

In summary the modus operandi for presentation of the program is:

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- the 'likes' and 'dislikes' of each person with dementia are made and noted; this is conducted either in audience environments or by individually 'one-on-one' contacts;
- a special long play program is then made up for each person; this consists only of the types of 'likes' without inclusion of any 'dislikes';
- the home or room of each person is provided with a small easy to operate audio-visual playing device;
- the pre-prepared long play program is inserted into the device to allow playback at will.

Technology involved:

The technology used in the home player allows only very limited remote control to prevent confusion so that the unit can just be easily switched on and off. The volume can only be reduced from a maximum pre-set level to assure others nearby cannot be disturbed. Only small effective high fidelity speakers are used to produce fine quality bass sound at low volume to avoid a 'tinny' sound. Sound is linked to a 39cm viewing screen which also responds to the instant on-off switching without pop-up distractions. Whenever the device is switched back on it picks up and resumes play from the last played segment of the person's entertainment program.

Overall it is easy for any person to operate whenever they feel like viewing and listening to their own enjoyably mind-occupying entertainment inside their own homes.

The device is approximately 65cm long x 20cm high x 25cm deep with components locked inside a case so that preset controls cannot be altered. It would fit easily on a small table and would look like this prototype:



Details of the process used to establish the 'likes' and 'dislikes' of each person by audience mode:

To understand and make record of each person with dementia's current likes and dislikes, which of course enables establishment of what each likes to enjoy viewing and hearing inside their rooms, a professionally prepared analysis is conducted weekly under a 12 months schedule presenting 780 clips in weekly presentations of 15 clips:

- within an audience forum session attended by those with dementia, with their family members encouraged to attend where possible and promoting audience

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involvement to encourage open discussions on common likes and dislikes, and also allows other 'wants' recalled to be aired between attendees.

- this presentation would be conducted within the operator's facility's meeting room using a standard HDMI input within a facilities' own large screen TV monitor to link the facilitator's computer-input program.
- each weekly session lasts about one hour, although a session may take longer depending on interest levels. Two trained facilitators present a pre-prepared variety of carefully selected types of short [i.e. each is usually of 2 to 4 minutes duration] and widely differing entertaining audio-visual 'clips'.
- as an example: one weekly program's 'index' screen looks like this. *[The facilitator clicks on each picture to then play the chosen clip so that the reactions of each client to each clip played can then noted by a facilitator]* Note: a special Christmas and Easter program selection is also included.

Dancers	1. "Merry Widow" ballet scene	2. Irish fiddle jig	3. Jitterbug for the oldies	4. Dancing kids	5. Rita Hayworth & Fred Astaire
					
Singers & Groups	6. A medley of favourite Perry Como songs	7. Engelbert Humperdinck "Just need someone to love"	8. Kris Kristofferson "For the good times"	9. Pavoritti "Nessan doma"	10. Michael Ball duet "You're going to miss my love"
					
Movies & Stars	11. Howard Keel & Kathryn Grayson in Showboat "Make Believe"	12. Doris Day on stage is "Dancing the blues away"	13. Dick van Dyke & kids "Chitty chitty bang-bang"	14. Kathryn Grayson & Marion Lanza "Save me a dream"	15. Dean Martin & Tony Bennett in a sing-a-long
					

A "young-at-heart" dementia research program - YAH - A7

- In total 15 chosen classifications of differing entertainment types have been pre-selected by their relativity to span the 1930s through to the 1990s to reflect capture-windows of past memories of the bulk of people now with dementia, often in their 70s to 90s plus. These broadly cover: *dancers, singers/groups, movies/stars, funny cartoons, travel, different countries, all sorts of animals, spiritually uplifting, illusions/magic, history/heritage, cars/boats/trains/aircraft, different skills, talented performers, jazz/bands, patriotic.*

Details of the process used to establish the 'likes' and 'dislikes' of each person by 'one-on-one' mode:

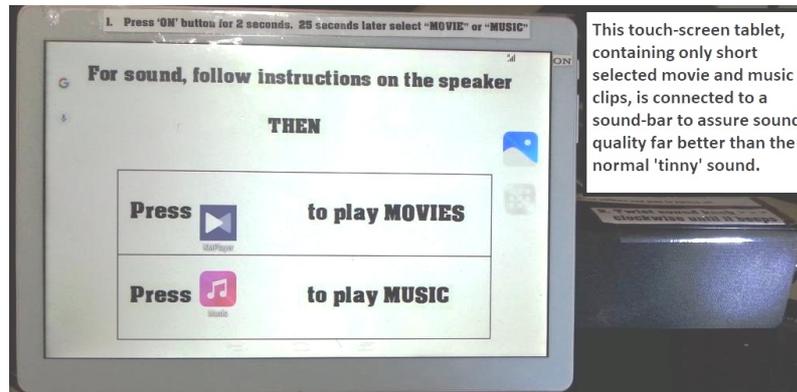
Carers and family members, who often provide the needed care, may prefer to use a one-on-one approach to see what can be recalled and liked. This prototyped device

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links a touch-screen tablet containing pre-programmed selected clips to a good quality bass-reproduction sound-bar:



A simple press of either the 'movies' or 'music' button then opens up a selection of short entertaining clips to enable a carer to observe and make note of which of the pictured screen plays is favoured by the person:



In summary:

If steps can be taken to implement programs such as outlined above, surely it will enhance the daily lives of both those people with dementia and their carers, be they employed within care facilities or are family members.

Aren't we all happier and more comfortable when we recall our special long-term memories, both visually and audibly, so don't those with dementia deserve that experience too?