

hidden



Don't Stop Me Now - Training Workshop Guide

This is a workshop guide for people who would like to use our 'Don't Stop Me Now' resources for team training. The aim of this workshop is for services, organisations, groups and venues to consider what they can do to become more dementia friendly. We also hope that people will be able to use this training to understand what it's like to walk in the shoes of two characters, Ruby & Dennis, and reach out to more people living with a dementia diagnosis.

Background:

'Hidden' is a series of immersive audio experiences that challenges you to take a walk in someone else's shoes. This episode tells the love story of two characters, Ruby and Dennis, who are husband and wife. Ruby lives with dementia and Dennis also cares for her. The story explores the challenges they face in staying active, doing some of the things they used to love, and enjoying their lives separately and together.

It has been created by people with lived experience of dementia or caring for people with dementia or Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), in collaboration with professional musicians, writers and health and social care partners. You will hear the voices of real people who are living with dementia. All the men's voices play the character Dennis, all the women's voices play Ruby.

Made By Mortals have used this audio experience as a catalyst for discussion in workshops with other people living with dementia, which has provided further insight into situations people living with dementia face. These have been edited into 'additional audio' packages that will also form part of this training.

This workshop has been designed to be used alongside our 'Don't Stop Me Now – Learning Resource,' which contains useful links about living with dementia and ends with a list of actions or goals for you or your organisation to work towards.

Resources Required:

- Eye masks
- Laptop/audio player
- Speakers/headphones
- 'Ruby & Dennis' Episode Audio
- Additional Audio from people with lived experience
- Don't Stop Me Now – Learning Resource
- Transcripts

Duration: 3hrs (with 10 minute break)

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Set-Up

It is important to consider the venue and environment in which you deliver this training workshop. This work can take people out of their comfort zones and so you want to ensure they are as comfortable as they can be. The work is immersive and theatrical; therefore you may want to consider the seating, seating layout, lighting, and overall space as part of this.

Before we start the workshop, we like to map out the session for participants:

'Today we are going to take a walk in somebody else's shoes. Using immersive audio created and performed by people living with dementia, we will meet fictional characters Ruby & Dennis. They are husband and wife. Dennis is also Ruby's carer. Ruby has a dementia diagnosis. We will learn about their life and the challenges they face. We will then answer questions to try and help Ruby & Dennis.'

This workshop may raise sensitive and emotional issues for some people, therefore we encourage you to provide relevant signposting information for participants who may be affected by some of the themes within the audio episode and subsequent discussions.

Finally, we like to remind people that this workshop is an opportunity for them to listen and reflect. It is space for open discussion and thinking. We want them to immerse themselves in the experience, connect with the characters and ask themselves, what can I do to help.

PART ONE: 1 hour

Introduction: In Your Shoes

This is a little ice breaker intended to get people talking and sharing something personal in a friendly and non-intimidating way.

Ask your participants to "share the story of the shoes they are wearing today."

This could be a few sentences about where they bought them; where they've been in them; have they done anything exciting or particularly memorable in these shoes?

We don't like to put people on the spot, so ask the participants to turn to the person/people around them and have this conversation in pairs/small groups initially.

After a few minutes, invite participants to share each other's stories, try and go round everybody if there is time. The facilitator may give an example first, using the shoes they are wearing themselves. If you have a large group and there isn't enough time to listen to everybody's response, while the participants are discussing with the people around them, use that time to pick up on a few confident speakers to hear from.

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Episode Audio

Before playing the episode, you may want to give participants some background information on the episode and how it was created based on the information on page 1.



Play the audio, 'Ruby & Dennis'

You could play this using an audio player linked to a speaker or if possible, have a system whereby participants are listening on headphones at the same time. When listening to the episode, we invite participants to wear eye masks to heighten their listening senses and enable them to fully immerse themselves in the experience.

Initial Response

Once the audio has finished, ask the participants to remove their eye masks and/or headphones (if necessary) and ask:

'How did that make you feel, professionally and personally?'

Again, allow the participants time to discuss this with people sat around them, and maybe swap seats so they get to speak to new people if possible. Like before, this also gives the facilitator the opportunity to move around the room so you have a good idea of who to turn to first to give their feedback.

Share participant responses to this question. You may want to question if there is a difference between their professional and personal response.

PART TWO: 20 Mins

What Is Dementia?

Split your participants into small groups and ask them to discuss what they thought was happening to Ruby when she went to the toilets at the cabaret night, and lost her way outside. Ask each group to share their thoughts.

Play this video from Alzheimer's Research which explains, what is dementia?

Acknowledge that your participants may not be experts on dementia/MCI and perhaps won't know what types of dementia someone has. However, having awareness of the key symptoms and the barriers they cause are useful. People living with dementia and their carers are still able to do things, and can have active and happy lives with your support.

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PART THREE: 1 Hour

Learning From Ruby & Dennis's Experience

Now we turn our attention to helping Ruby & Dennis and ask:

'What does a good experience look like for Ruby & Dennis at your service/group/venue/organisation?'

Give people the opportunity to talk in small groups and then share feedback.

Explain that we have met with other people with lived experience of dementia and their carers and played them the audio experience also. We asked them 'what does a good life look like for Ruby and Dennis?' This said:



***Play 'Additional Audio 1 – What does a good life look like for Ruby & Dennis?'**

You may want to ask participants if there are any further thoughts or reflections based on what they have heard.

Now, ask your participants:

'What are the barriers for Ruby & Dennis (from getting that good life/good experience at your service/group/venue/organisation)?'

Again, give people the opportunity to talk in small groups and then share feedback. To inform their thinking, you may wish to invite your participants to refer to pages 1-5 of our 'Don't Stop Me Now - Learning Resource' when thinking about the barriers for Ruby and to pages 6-7 when thinking about barriers for Dennis.

Once you've heard from your participants, refer back to the people with lived experience and...



***Play 'Additional Audio 2 – What are the barriers for Ruby & Dennis?'**

Again, you may want to ask participants if there are any further thoughts or reflections based on what they have heard.

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Finally, ask your participants:

'What or who could help Ruby & Dennis overcome those barriers (and achieve the good experience)?'

This time, before giving participants the opportunity to discuss...



***Play 'Additional Audio 3 – What or who can help?'**

We do this so that participants have all the information to help their discussions and ultimately inform the last section of the workshop.

PART FOUR: 30 Mins

Call To Action

Ask one final question to your participants:

'What can you/your team do to give Ruby & Dennis (and people like them) the best experience possible (at your service/venue/organisation)?'

This is a call to action, a pledge. It could be a change in attitude or process, relationship or approach to communication. It could be an environmental change or a practical alteration to your services.

Before making your pledges, you may wish to turn to page 10 of the 'Don't Stop Me Now Learning Resource' to understand what the benefits are for us all when services, organisations and venues become more dementia friendly. Before making your pledges, you may wish to turn to page 10 of the 'Don't Stop Me Now Learning Resource' to understand what the benefits are for us all when services, organisations and venues become more dementia friendly.

In order to help your participants with their pledges, you may want to refer back to the 'Don't Stop Me Now - Learning Resource.' On page 9 you will find questions to consider under the headings: people, programme and place. Also, on pages 9 and 10 there are links which give examples of the changes other services, groups, venues and organisations have made to provide more dementia-friendly settings.

Like before, give participants a chance to discuss their thoughts in small groups between themselves before sharing altogether. You may want to consider how to gather and track these responses in order to monitor impact and/or change over a longer period of time. For example, create a 'pledge' document that you revisit with your participants 3, 6 and 12 months after this workshop.

To close the workshop you may wish to read the information below on how we made this audio episode 'Hidden - Ruby & Dennis' followed by playing the last 2'17", Ruby and Dennis's wedding song.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the co-creators for their courage and openness when they shared their lived experiences with us.

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PART FIVE: 10 Mins (Optional Extra)

How We Create A Character:

Ruby & Dennis are fictional characters devised by people who are living with or care for people with a dementia diagnosis or (mild cognitive impairment, MCI). In collaboration with a theatre writer, composer and sound designer, the group created the characters using their imaginations and lived experience as inspiration. We create a fully rounded person, including but not limited to: what they wear; what food they like; their family and/or friends; their hobbies; their home; their day-to-day life.

We make characters in this way so that every contributor owns a piece of that character. We don't tell any one individual's story. This enables our lived experience groups to share an idea or personal experience and portray this onto the characters, without them feeling like they themselves have been violated in any way. It also allows us to put the character into different situations, for example, arriving at your venue, service or organisation.

About The Music:

The music heard in 'Hidden - Ruby & Dennis' was co-created with a composer, musician and people with lived experience of dementia and MCI. Together, the group created the music to represent certain ideas and themes within the story. For example, the audio opens and closes with the same piece of music, which we imagine is the accompaniment to Ruby & Dennis's wedding song, a reference to the love they share. The chord progression, created by the group, alternates between major and minor (happy and sad sounding chords) reflecting the conflict of the story, but ultimately providing a feeling of hope.

On several occasions in this 'wedding song', you can hear the electric guitar play a tuneful melody. To create this, the group were asked to say 'Ruby and Dennis' in a rhythm, like a chant or rap. We then whistled a tune to match that rhythm and that ended up being the melody played by the electric guitar. Picture Dennis, walking around their family home whistling that tune as you hear it.

Music is also used throughout the piece to represent dementia. Whenever Ruby encounters a dementia-related problem it is underscored with this music. One participant described living with dementia or MCI as being 'lost in a fog.' Together we composed a rhythm for that phrase, "lost in a fog," which you can hear in the bass (lower pitch) part of the music, whenever Ruby is challenged by her dementia.

Another participant suggested that dementia feels like "your brain is cutting in and out, like the power button is temporarily switched off." To represent this idea, we used a music production technique called 'gating'. You can hear this in the music as the sound appears to sporadically cut out.

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