

Scenario:

Antonio & Lisa Roleplay

People with dementia can feel anxious, confused and scared when they are in a situation/setting unfamiliar to them, which can lead to agitation and aggression. This brief training scenario depicts an older man with middle-stage dementia in a nursing home. He does not recognise his surroundings, leading him to feel threatened and fearful. Participants act out the roles of the characters in this roleplay, dramatising the experience of dementia symptoms in an engaging and immersive way.



Aims

The aim of this training scenario is to simulate the experience of dementia symptoms and the accompanying emotions through drama – allowing participants to step into the shoes of a person with dementia, and the shoes of staff in a nursing home.



Learning Objectives

- To foster empathy for people experiencing dementia symptoms and for the individuals supporting a person with dementia
- To increase understanding of the experience of dementia symptoms through acting out the role of a person with dementia.
- To encourage dementia care staff to consider their own approach when communicating with a person with dementia



When to use this scenario

This training scenario depicts symptoms typical of middle stage dementia. It is an interactive, dramatic form of training and therefore, cannot be conducted in an online training setting. This training is suitable for dementia care staff and for family members.

The scene is very brief, meaning it can be used in tandem with other roleplays such as 'Gianni's Adventures'.



Equipment

- Printed roleplay script for the 2 characters



Downloadable supporting materials

- Slide deck
- Evaluation form

Facilitation Instructions

Set-up:

- The training room should be set up so that there is sufficient space to act out the roleplay – a small area at the front of the room easily visible to participants who are not taking a role.

Briefing:

This scenario may be introduced using the following:



- *"A good way of simulating the experience of dementia, and gaining a better understanding of the symptoms, is through roleplay. This training scenario will be an immersive exercise about an older man with dementia and his carer in a nursing home."*
- *"Participation in the roleplay is completely voluntary. It is encouraged that you do your best to fully immerse yourself in the role in order to take something meaningful from the experience. For some people, this may involve stepping out of their comfort zone and therefore it's important that everyone has mutual respect during this scenario."*



15 minutes

Activity Instructions



1. Select 2 participants who would like to act in the roleplay as Antonio and Lisa. (Optionally, additional participants can act as other care staff members).
- Antonio is an older adult in a nursing home, experiencing middle-stage symptoms of dementia. He is in a state of confusion and agitation.
- Lisa is a carer in the nursing home and grows fearful of Antonio as he becomes increasingly agitated and aggressive.
2. Further information can be taken from the roleplay script.
3. Allow the participants some time to familiarise themselves with their respective scripts
4. Instruct the participants to begin acting out the scenario.
5. Allow time for a group discussion following the end of the roleplay.



Helpful Tips

The roleplay scenario being acted out is extremely brief. It is important to have an extensive discussion breaking down the different elements of the scene and the reasons behind the characters' behaviours.

Group Reflection / Discussion



Allow for a reflection period. In a group, discuss the following points:

- What emotions were evoked while acting in the role of Antonio/Lisa?
- In what ways do you think Lisa communicated well with Antonio?
- Do you think Lisa could have done something different in order to calm Antonio down?
- What was it that made Antonio agitated?
- What do you think are the pros and cons of acting out a scenario like this?

Additional Resources



- **Responding to aggression and anger in persons with dementia:**
<https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors/agression-anger>