



Suitcase Stories Warwickshire

Evaluation Report -Jenny Davis 3 November 2020 to 13 May 2021

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1) Introduction

Suitcase Stories Warwickshire was a music and reminiscence well-being project for people living with dementia and their carers running for 18 weeks x 2hrs at Rugby library and a sheltered housing home in Rugby (9 weeks at each location). This was in partnership with Arts Uplift CIC, Orchestra of the Swan, Warwickshire Reminiscence Action Project and Warwickshire libraries. However due to Covid-19 coming we could not deliver this project in person, so it was delayed for a while and then adapted to be delivered online.

The adapted project was 15 x 1.5hr online reminiscence and music workshops on Zoom with 3 care homes (5 weeks each). We were unable to deliver 18 workshops due to the amount of time it took to re-work the project which had to be paid for. Helen our reminiscence worker photographed the objects from Warwickshire Reminiscence Action Project's stock instead of bringing them in to the session and she created 5 presentations based on different themes. The themes were 'Dressed to the Nines', 'Food and Cookery' 'A Trip to the Seaside' 'Games and Entertainment' 'School Days'.

2) Aims and Objectives and Statistics

The aim of Suitcase Stories Warwickshire was to decrease isolation and loneliness, improve the mental well-being and quality of life of people living with dementia and older people living in Rugby through a music and reminiscence project.

We achieved these by;

- Delivering 10 x 1.5hr live music and reminiscence sessions with Orchestra of the Swan and Helen Fountain at Anya Court, Westlands and Cedar Lodge care homes with people living with dementia and older people. Each week had a different theme 'Dressed to the Nines' 'Food to the table', 'Holidays', 'Fun, Games and Entertainment' and 'School Days'. The objects were from the 40's, 50's, 60's and 70's
- Delivering 5 x 1.5hr zoom recorded music and reminiscence sessions with Orchestra of the Swan and Helen Fountain for Red House and Rugby Care Centre care homes with people living with dementia. The themes were the same.
- Collecting photographic evidence
- Evaluating the project and producing a report



Methodology

The methods we have used to evaluate the project are;

- Mood indicator - before and after each session people were how they were feeling
- Observation sheets filled out by care home staff
- Monitoring form
- Registration form
- Observations from artists, reminiscence workers and evaluator

Data collected

Attendance

Cedar Lodge Care Home, Stratford Upon Avon 10 people and 1 staff

Westlands Care Home, Rugby 4 people and 1 staff

Anya Court Care Home, Rugby 12 people and 2 staff

Total people 25

Gender

7 men 18 women

Age

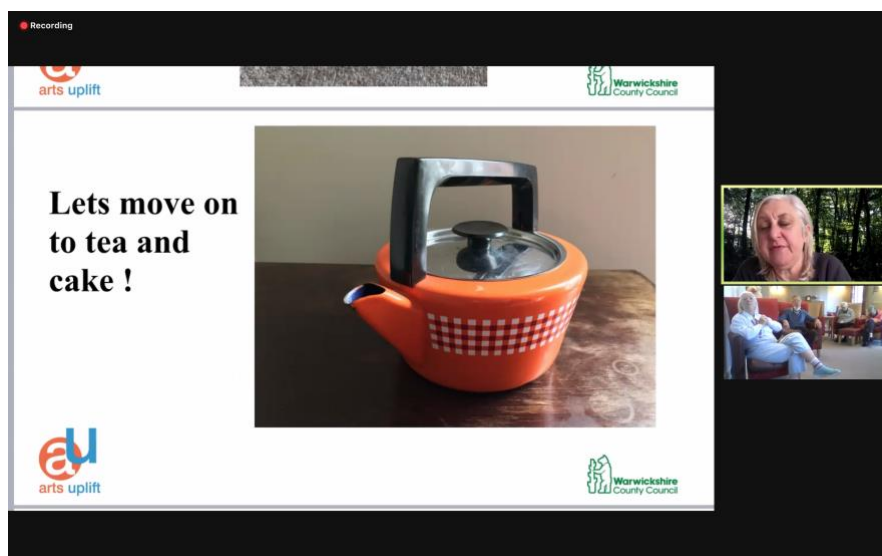
65+

Ethnic Minority

All participants were White British

Non-discrimination

The sessions were open to all in the care home and we welcomed everyone that showed an interest. We marketed it to all the care homes in Rugby. There was structure in the sessions as the theme was set and the presentations of the objects were fixed so there was not as much flexibility as we would normally offer, but the musicians took on board people's music tastes and added those into the following sessions. The handling objects were from a wide variety of era's, so we feel that we have catered for a wide age range of people. Also, there was an equal mix of items that women and men might have used or had so both men and women did not feel excluded.



3) Feedback from Evaluation Tools and Observations

As Rugby Care Centre were given zoom recordings of the sessions to watch later because they could not attend due to Covid outbreaks and poor internet connection, we do not have any results on this from them. The care staff were asked to collate this when the residents were watching it, but they did not send any information to report back on.

Happiness Questions

Before and after the session's residents were asked how they were feeling and scored from poor/ok/good/brilliant to see if their mood had changed because of the intervention.

Anya Court

Anya Court were sent a Survey Monkey questionnaire that the care staff filled out. They were asked to respond for the group rather than individual people. We had results for 4 out of the 5 questionnaires that were sent.

On 1 occasion the groups mood improved from ok to good

On 1 occasion the groups mood stayed the same at good

On 2 occasions the groups mood improved from good to brilliant

Westlands

For the two sessions that Westlands attended, due to the high level of dementia the residents had, they were unable to respond to the mood indicator questions.

Cedar Lodge

Cedar Lodge attended 4 out of the 5 sessions.

Week 2- of the 5 participants that we have results for 2 people improved their mood, 2 stayed the same and 1 person's mood was worse as they became agitated. 1 person jumped from feeling ok to brilliant.

Week 3- of the 4 participants that attended all participants said that their mood had improved. 1 person felt very good to brilliant and 3 people felt ok to good.

Week 4-of the 4 participants we have results for, three people's mood stayed the same and 1 person's mood improved.

Week 5-of the 3 participants we have results for all of the participant's mood improved. 1 person's mood jumped from poor to good.

Observation Sheets

The care staff were asked to score the residents per session on a number of areas. The observation questionnaire is in appendix 1.

Anya Court

Questions 1-8 The higher the score the better well being

Person	Average total score in session	Total Score not in session	Well-being Result
A	27	36	Higher not in session
B	37	37	same
C	30	48	Higher not in session
D	31	22	Higher in the session
E	37	37	Same
F	33	21	Higher in the session
G	32	15	Higher in the session
H	30	32	Higher not in the session

Questions 9-10 The lower the score the better well being

Person	Total score in session	Total score in session	Well Being Result
A	2	2	same
B	4	2	Lower not in the session
C	2	2	same
D	2	3	Lower in the session
E	2	2	same
F	2	4	Lower in the session
G	4	5	Lower in the session
H	2	2	Same

Westlands

Questions 1-8 The higher the score the better well being

Person	Total score in session	Total score not in session	Well-being Result
I	16	32	Higher not in session
J	26	24	Higher in session

K	21	32	Higher not in session
L	19	15	Higher in session

Questions 9-10 The lower the score the better the well being

Person	Total score in session	Total score not in session	Well-being Result
I	2	8	Lower in session
J	2	8	Lower in session
K	2	8	Lower in session
L	2	5	Lower in session

Cedar Lodge

Questions 1-8 The higher the score the better well being

Person	Total average score in session	Score not in session	Well-being Result
M	29	27	Higher in session
N	40	36	Higher in session
O	40	32	Higher in session
P	33	29	Higher in session
Q	27	27	The same
R	31	28	Higher in session

Question 8-10 The lower the score the better the well being

Person	Total score in session	Score not in session	Well-being Result
M	2	4	Lower in session
N	2	4	Lower in session
O	2	4	Lower in session
P	2	2	The same
Q	2	4	Lower in session
R	2	4	Lower in session

Analysis of the Results

For Cedar Lodge and Anya Court it can be seen that due to the music and reminiscence sessions the resident's mood improved from beginning to the end of the workshops and for some there was a significant increase in mood.

The observations sheets that the care staff filled in showed a mix of results. For 22 residents the activities improved their well-being, for 6 residents it did not and for 8 residents their well-being was the same compared to when they were not in the activity. It is worth highlighting, particularly at Cedar Lodge, all of the resident's wellbeing apart from one seemed to be better from doing the activity.

Observations from reminiscence worker, artists and evaluator

Anya Court

“The residents from Anya Court were mouthing the words to the songs, smiling and tapping their feet”-evaluator

“So overall I was picking up conversations in the room between staff and residents and got a sense that the questions were being answered even if not all answers could be relayed back to me. I could hear bits of information being shared about people’s life stories, for example where they went to school, that some were in the services etc which started to build a picture of the person and may have strengthened relationships between residents and staff and residents and residents, but it was hard to know that from the remoteness of Zoom. Staff comments at end of the session seemed to suggest that the sessions had been enjoyed and the fact that several of the residents returned week after week was a positive sign. During the singing I noticed residents swaying and clapping along as far as I could see and enjoying the music.

It was so frustrating that I lost my laptop just before the project started as my iPad screen was much smaller so I couldn’t pick up as much, but I did get the sense that the atmosphere in the room was positive and that both residents and staff alike were enjoying the sessions.”
Helen Fountain, reminiscence worker

Cedar Lodge/Westlands care home

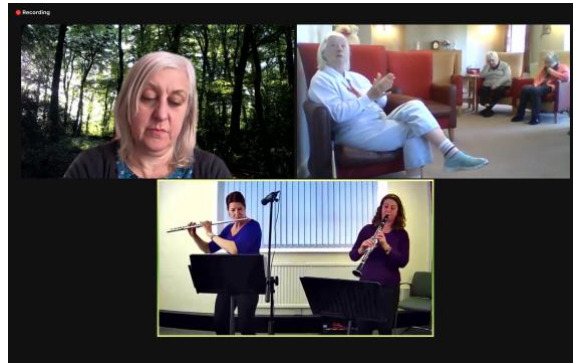
“I don’t recall any specific comments during the sessions, but it was possible at times to observe the participants moving in time to the music and obviously enjoying it. There were also positive responses to some of the photos as participants obviously recognised the objects being presented and began to talk about them. These conversations often evolved into sharing of previous experiences and enabled us all to get to know each other a bit better and enabled the musicians to link the discussions to the music.

General feedback from artists/reminiscence worker

“It’s been a great pleasure to work with Arts Uplift the Orchestra of the Swan and the Care Homes on the Virtual Suitcase Stories for Care Homes project and a tribute to the ingenuity, flexibility and sheer determination of all involved that the project was able to go ahead and achieve some really positive outcomes.” Helen reminiscence worker

“I did a set of sessions with Olly in the run-up to Christmas. They were really enjoyable and Care Home(s) we visited were brilliant. The carers got involved and helped the sessions so much by their interaction. I remember the residents got really involved with the reminiscence chats and we were able to reference what they’d been talking about in our music sets. It was great that Helen gave us the heads up on the themes as we were able to prepare music for each theme and each section. Staff and residents got really involved with the singing, and also actions to some of the songs.

Spending time with the residents over a few weeks meant that we could pick up on any particular favourites they had - I seem to remember Elvis was a favourite, so we put a couple of his in! One of the visits coincided with Remembrance Day so we asked Helen if our last set could be dedicated to remembering. It was really special and evoked some lovely responses from some of the residents. One gentleman commented on the quality of the music which was so heartening as we were on Zoom.



I also thoroughly enjoyed the sessions in the Spring with Sally. We interacted with two Care Homes. The one in Rugby had a few technical difficulties and were using an iPad which obviously had a small screen so a little tricky for the resident who was there to engage with it fully. We did see her face looking at the screen which was nice. It appeared as though they had better tech at Cedar lodge and the sessions there were very lively! The reminiscing was great - you could hear the residents talking to each other as well as to Helen which was fab. Musically, they were very switched on and sang, conducted and did actions heartily! In fact, in the introduction to one of the songs, we didn't actually name it, just said who sang it in which film. A lady commented afterwards that it would be good for us to introduce the titles so they can sing from the beginning! So, we made sure we did!

D used to be a ballet dancer so we played some famous ballet music (from Swan Lake and Nutcracker) and she apparently moved her arms to the music (we couldn't see her) . A gentleman used to play the violin so we played Massenet's 'Meditation' hoping that he will have played that - he moved his arms as if playing the violin.

We all felt that these sessions were really valuable and highlighted how the spontaneity of live sessions are SO valuable - even on Zoom! " Artist Dianne from Orchestra of the Swan

4) Quotes from participants and care home staff

Anya Court care home

"Yes we've really enjoyed it"

"VERY GOOD, thank you"

"That was nice wasn't it?"

“Very good”

“content simple but excellent” Staff

“the quality of the music was excellent” Staff

“Everyone expressed that they had enjoyed the session and the variety of content” Staff

“Residents were very engaged and enjoyed this session very much” Staff

“The residents absolutely loved today’s session and were very engaged....can’t wait for the next one” Staff

“We will miss this session, the residents loved it and were very engaged” Staff

Westlands care home

“Unfortunately, our residents didn’t engage as we had hoped, the first session was successful but after that we didn’t have anyone available who could remain engaged for the duration of the presentations. I didn’t have access to a room last week and there was a lot of background noise on our units making it even harder to hear, Also the sound quality that came through wasn’t great, this was probably due to the fact that I work with a tablet not a laptop and don’t have access to one, this also restricted our viewing as we can only really have a couple of people sitting around a tablet and the screen size isn’t big enough to capture our audience.”

Cedar Lodge care home

“wonderful”

loved “singing to the music”

“if they didn’t like it, they would have left” staff

“fully appreciate it”

“singing along, lots of hand actions” staff

“they all felt better afterwards” staff



5) Conclusions and Recommendations

From all of the evaluation feedback certainly for two out of the three care homes their residents enjoyed the music and reminiscence sessions on zoom and their well-being improved because of engaging in it despite it being on zoom and not face to face. For Westlands care home the zoom delivery method did not engage the residents, but this maybe partly down to the small iPad that was used rather than it being streamed through a large TV screen.

The project has thrown up the digital inequalities that exist between care homes and the level of technical knowledge/skill of the care staff in each home. A lot of the success of the project came down to whether the right technology was there, and the staff knew what they were doing.

The presentations created for the reminiscence can be used again by the care home which helps to leave a legacy to the project. The care homes have also been signposted to Orchestra of the Swan's online music resource of videos and instructions that can be used in care home sessions moving forward.

Recommendations for arts and reminiscence on Zoom

- 1) Create a power point presentation of the handling objects instead of having them in person which can be referred to
- 2) Make sure the internet connection is strong at the care home and where the artists are delivering
- 3) Make sure there is a large screen that all the residents can see clearly
- 4) Encourage the care staff to move the camera around the room to whoever is talking so that it is easy for the artists to relate and have a conversation with them
- 5) Don't spend too much time focusing on one person in the reminiscence as this sometimes disengages the others in the group as they can tire of just listening
- 6) Encourage the care staff to repeat what the residents are saying into the microphone so that the artists can hear what is being said as it sometimes hard to hear
- 7) Don't make the group too big so that everyone gets a chance to speak (ideally no more than 8)
- 8) Delivering on zoom is likely to be more well received with people with earlier stages of dementia
- 9) Encourage care home staff to bring in objects or photos that relate to the theme of the week
- 10) Use Zoom rather than other online platforms
- 11) Start the sessions 15 minutes early to iron out any technical difficulties

6) Appendix 1

Well Being Questionnaire



Name of care home.....

Name of person.....

Week no	1	2	3	4	5		Not in session
Did the participants seem...						Average	
To be enjoying themselves							
Happy or contented							
Engaged or focussed							
Engaging confidently with people							
Relaxed							
Physically co-ordinated							
Able to make up their own mind							
To be thinking clearly							
Depressed							
Lonely							

Key							
1	Not at all	4	Most of the session (45-60 mins)				
2	Briefly (20 mins or less)	5	All of the session (60 mins plus)				
3	Some of the session (20-44mins)						