
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Forget dementia, remember the person!

ICIC20 Virtual Conference – September 2020

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If we focus on the possibilities of people with dementia instead of their limitations, their dementia will disappear behind their talents and not the other way round, that is the starting point of the next chapter of the Flemish awareness raising campaign 'Forget dementia, remember the person'. The innovative and emancipatory story of this campaign forms one of the foundations of the Dementia Strategy of Flanders (Belgium) and is written together with people with dementia and their caregivers. Their vision is the beating heart of 'Forget dementia remember the person': respectful communication is the basis for person-centered care and an inclusive society.

On the dynamic web platform and social media of the campaign people can find a wide range of dementia-friendly communication tools, as a starting point to break down the stigma on dementia and to give a voice to the person behind the condition. We've released a series of cartoons that translate the baseline 'Forget dementia, remember the person'. Together with a professional photographer and people with young-onset dementia we made posters that carry out the message. We made four short graphic novel-stories about communication in the last stages of dementia when words disappear. People can order for free photographs from a picture database. But the beating heart of the campaign, are the personal stories of the experts, namely people with dementia, their caregivers and the people who experience dementia day-to-day.

In this presentation we explain the vision behind the campaign, we give snapshots of the rich source of communication tools developed, we share highlights of the personal testimonies we recorded and we will share the short animation movie 'Forget dementia, remember the person', written together with people with dementia of the first-ever 'Working group of people with dementia' that was founded in Belgium last year. We will conclude this presentation with their call to action for future policy, research and projects in the field of dementia, with a crystal clear vision on what true empowerment of people with dementia means