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**Thomas Leigh** offers in-patient care for older people and are based in Knotty Ash, Liverpool.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_kukMGu3T7o>

Roles within the home include: nursing / care staff, domestic staff, catering staff, admin support and maintenance staff. Another role which is important is that of the Activity Organiser (AO). Use the internet to research what the role of an Activity Organiser consists of. Take time to view the Merseycare website - <http://www.merseycare.nhs.uk/>

**Activity Organiser:**

The role of an Activity Organiser is engaging people with dementia in activities that can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. Studies have demonstrated an improvement in depression and anxiety through the provision of structured activity programmes. The role of the AO is of great benefit to clients suffering from various forms of dementia.

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| **List below 3 examples of activities carried out by the AO that you think could help dementia sufferers:**  1  2  3 |

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| **What do you think are the requirements for an Activity Organiser? What attributes & qualities should they have in order to do their job well?** |

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| **Working with dementia sufferers isn’t easy – After a hard day of working within what can be a challenging, difficult environment what do you think staff get out of working with this client group?** |

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| Take time to think about how you would like **your** family member to be treated when in in-patient care**: what is essential in staff to care for vulnerable, ill clients?** |

**Reminiscence Therapy (RT)** is one of the most popular psycho-social interventions in dementia care and is highly rated by staff and participants. RT is effective in improving mood in older people and works by encouraging people to revisit moments from their past such as: The Homemaker – offer a cloth for the client to wipe the tables – it’s not about doing loads of work but rather to give the clients something familiar and meaningful to do.

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| **Can you think of safe, meaningful tasks that can be given to clients who fall under the following descriptions:**  The Handyman:  The Parent / Caregiver:  The Animal Lover:  The Gardener: |

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| **How many types of dementia are there? Name 4 below:**  1  2  3  4 |

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| **What do you think are the symptoms of dementia? List 3 below:**  **1**  **2**  **3** |

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| **What do you think are the benefits of having an Activity Organiser working with dementia sufferers?** |

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| **What qualifications / qualities do you think are needed for the role of Activity Organiser and how much do you think they earn yearly?** |

The role of the AO helps in establishing a supportive environment for the client and their family - The physical and social environment plays an integral role in all care settings. The environment can foster socialization, independence, meaningful activity and offer a sense of community, safety, comfort, privacy, and dignity for everyone. Relationship building is fostered in an environment where interactions take place naturally.

**Life Stories – Dementia:**

***Tony was a well respected session musician in the 80’s. His music is still his life. So for Tony Sweeney hearing the news that he had dementia was too much to bear. He’d already spent ten years learning to live with Parkinson’s disease so at just 51 Tony found it hard to pick himself up. “I thought the nurse was lying. How could this be happening to me? I had three kids; I played music seven or eight hours a day. I was devastated.”***

***The house Tony shares with wife Jacqui, a nurse practitioner, is packed with musical instruments. He gives renditions on each filling the room with, Bluegrass, Spanish classical, honky tonk; each uplifting in the way that music can be. His two sons and daughter, all successful musicians in their own right, have bought him a specially crafted lounge guitar – it’s light, he doesn’t struggle to hold it like some of the others.***

***“Life has been cruel and kind to me, I have an amazing family that I’m so proud of and a gift in music that still gives me so much pleasure.  As my Nan used to say ‘you’ve got a gift now go out there and use it!’***

***“But I’ve had some low times and if it hadn’t been for the post diagnostic support group at Mossley Hill I’m not sure I’d have coped. They care and it comes across.”***

***“I’m naturally loud, but after I was diagnosed I became introverted andI started stuttering. The community team taught me exercises, helped me to stay in the moment and gave me the confidence to get the words out. They gave me back my confidence. “The support has been immense. It’s one of the best systems I’ve ever experienced.  When we go to the groups and on the memory trips it’s like being on holiday! They see everyone as an individual and that your personality hasn’t changed, you’re still the same person. I always liked to make people laugh; my doctor said ‘you still do that!”. “My wife and I celebrated our silver wedding. I’d always played at parties, it was just that this time she had to hold me up while I played…all I ask of people is don’t judge. If I fall over or I can’t get my words out help me up, let me finish my sentence. I’m a human being with something to give.***

***Tony’s Occupational therapist is full of admiration. “It feels so raw when you get the diagnosis, people don’t want to admit they’re struggling. I asked Tony to come back to the post diagnostic group to talk to people who had just been diagnosed with young onset dementia. He’s an inspiration.”***

***Tony’s latest project is to get his songs and poems published. “I used to write them down but when my hands became shaky so I bought a small recorder – you have to adapt so you can carry on doing the things you want to. By publishing them other people can relate to my experiences – I may not be immortal but my words will be. ”***

There is currently no cure for dementia. In fact, because dementia is caused by different diseases it is unlikely that there will be a single cure for dementia. **Do you think that in your lifetime there will be a cure for dementia type illnesses?**