CHOICE & COMPASSION

dementia care stories



respecting dignity, independence, and rights in dementia care



Step inside a care home, where every day is about respecting choices. Join David, who loves his walks, Amina, who stands by her beliefs, and Maggie, whose love for sweet treats still shines through.

This comic shows how care homes can support people living with dementia with their independence and dignity, even when decisions seem tricky. Discover the power of care that truly puts people first and protects their rights.



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Editor Gabi Putnoki



This comic was created as part of the Care in Comics Project at the University of Sheffield, led by the Centre for International Research on Care, Labour and Equalities (CIRCLE). https://sheffield.ac.uk/circle/care-comics

The comic is based on findings from two NIHR-funded studies: ENACT (Evaluating staff training and the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act in care homes for older adults - Award ID: NIHR152800) and FREEDEM (Reframing 'wandering' as a meaningful activity using realist synthesis and qualitative exploration - Award ID: NIHR205173).





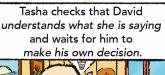
DAVID A

David has Alzheimer's disease and he's been living in the care home for a few months.











David has shown me that he understands it's cold, and he is still happy to go out. I'm still not sure it's a good idea...













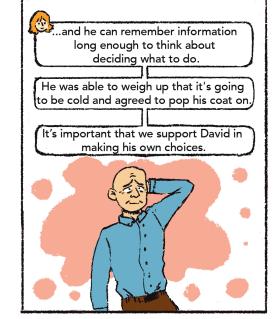


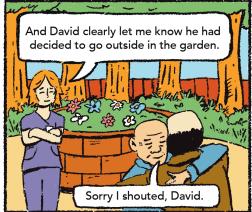
20 minutes later











Alan may think that David is unwise to be outside, but because David has the capacity to make the decision for himself, we need respect his choice.

OAM-INA





















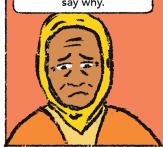




She may not have verbally told you, but Mrs Hassan is using her cards to tell us what she wants.



She has communicated her wishes not to play, even though she couldn't say why.



She can make her own decisions about what she joins in with.

Omar and Mary are doing some arts and crafts... should we join them instead?



didn't realise bingo was against your beliefs.

I'm sorry Amina, I



Capacity is determined for each decision. Amina can still make a decision about playing bingo or not, but she may struggle with more complex decisions, for example, about her treatment.





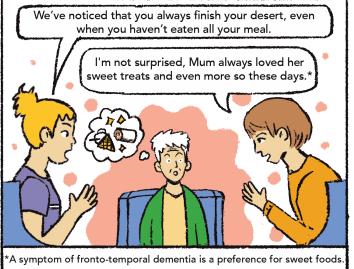


















Even though Maggie wasn't able to communicate the decision herself, the care staff worked with her family to think about what Maggie likes best, and what decision she might have made.

This should prioritise Maggie's wellbeing and preferences, and Helen and Sue should try to choose the option that gives Maggie the most freedom and is in her best interests.













means being able to understand and make decisions. Some key points:

- Having dementia doesn't mean someone can't decide for themselves we always start by assuming they can.
- · Before deciding that someone lacks capacity, we must support them, for example, by simplifying, using pictures, or allowing more time.
- People have the right to make choices that others might consider unwise or unconventional, even if it differs from what others might recommend.
- If someone lacks the capacity to make a specific decision, actions taken on their behalf must prioritise their best interests by thinking about their feelings, beliefs and values.
- When deciding for someone else, choose the option that respects their rights and freedom the most.