



SAIF Briefing Note: Dementia (1)

November 2014

An Overview of Dementia

KEY POINTS

- Dementia is expected to be the biggest killer in the UK within 10 years
- Funeral directors need to be able to understand the disease.
- The Virtual Dementia Tour allows people to empathise with how a dementia sufferer is feeling
- SAIF Members qualify for reduced costs on the Virtual Dementia Tour

Dementia is a word that we are all starting to hear more and more in the media. But actually what is it and why is it important to funeral directors across the UK?

SAIF have recognised that Dementia is a growing issue within the UK and are today committing to become a Dementia Friendly organisation. Dementia is quickly becoming an issue that is touching the lives of many of our members and communities we serve. We cannot avoid Dementia and cannot be complacent in realising that we will need a high level of understanding of this disease for future clients and in supporting their families.

So what actually is Dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term. It describes the symptoms that occur when the brain is affected by certain diseases or conditions. There are over 100 types of dementia although some are far more common than others. They are often named according to the condition that has caused the dementia such as vascular dementia which is caused by problems of supply of oxygen to the brain via the blood. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of Dementia and is caused by proteins attaching to the stems of the brain cells causing them to die.

So how does this affect members of SAIF?

As funeral directors we are central to our communities at their most difficult times. We give compassion and understanding when families need it and provide a competent and professional service which must remain at the heart of our members' core values. But the fact remains that we must educate ourselves into the journey that families have

been through to provide a relevant level of understanding.

What does the research show?

- Today Dementia is the 8th biggest killer in the UK and the only disease without a cure. Within 5 years this will increase to the 4th biggest killer in the UK and within only 10 years Dementia is expected to be the biggest killer in the UK and the only one without a cure.
- There are 820,000 people diagnosed with Dementia in the UK today. There are a further 44% living with the disease but un-diagnosed.
- It was reported in the press on 30th October 2014, that Dementia is the leading cause of death for women in England and Wales. 1 in 3 people will develop this disease.

With all of this in mind SAIF needs to help you stay ahead of the disease and commit to becoming a Dementia friendly organisation and the first trade association for funeral directors to show this commitment.

training2care

SAIF are linking with training2care, the UK's licence holders of the Virtual Dementia Tour[®] – a hands-on, sensitivity training programme which gives people a greater understanding of the physical and mental challenges people with Dementia.



Developed in the United States and experienced by over 1 Million people in 17 countries, the Virtual Dementia Tour® has been used and widely acclaimed for the past 13 years. Glenn Knight, managing director of Training 2 CARE (UK) Ltd, says the Virtual Dementia Tour has been praised by experts from around the world and is a major watershed for dementia care in this country.

He continues: “It is a true sensitivity programme created for anyone seeking to understand the physical and mental challenges of those suffering from Alzheimer’s and dementia. In short, it is a total immersion which allows you to feel and understand what the person with dementia is feeling.”

Based on years of scholarly research, the patented Virtual Dementia Tour was created in America by P. K. Beville, M.S., a leading specialist in geriatrics and founder in 1997 of Second Wind Dreams®, an international non-profit corporation.

SAIF has recognised that the Virtual Dementia Tour® is a training course that will help the funeral directors to directly understand the issues surrounding dementia and how people may react whilst in need of their service. SAIF recognise that ‘walking in their shoes’ and actually experiencing these issues will help us all understand this and importantly improve our service.

During a Virtual Dementia Tour experience, participants meet with certified trainers who guide them through the Tour and fit them out with patented devices that alter the senses. Tasks and exercises that are part of the Tour enable carers and professionals to experience for themselves the physical and mental challenges facing those with dementia.

Glenn Knight said: “The major benefit of the Virtual Dementia Tour is that it gives you a window into the world of those suffering with dementia. It truly is an unusual, emotional and very thought-provoking experience. It's impossible to know exactly what it feels like to have Alzheimer's, but the Virtual Dementia Tour brings people closer to what it is like to have dementia than any other system in existence.”



VIRTUAL DEMENTIA TOUR®
YOUR WINDOW INTO THEIR WORLD

