

## **Support for members living with dementia.**

The following information aims to support U3A members who have a diagnosis of dementia, so that for as long as it is appropriate, they can continue to enjoy and participate in U3A activities.

The information is also for those without a formal diagnosis but who may be in the early stages of the disease.

It is based on and adapted from tips provided by Cumbria County Council in its leaflet on "Dementia Friendly Communities in Cumbria".

It is possible for people with dementia to live well if those around them understand how they can help in simple ways.

### **Speak clearly**

Speak clearly, calmly and slowly to allow the person time to understand the information. Use simple short sentences and avoid direct questions.

### **Body Language**

Smile warmly, make eye contact, make sure you are on the person's level, use a friendly tone and respect personal space.

### **Show Respect and Patience**

Adapt what you are saying if the person with dementia doesn't understand. They may be slow at finding the right words. Don't rush-go at their pace. Talk directly to them- ignoring them and talking to their carer can be very upsetting for them.

### **Listen**

Listen carefully to what the person has to say, giving plenty of encouragement. Look for clues of what they might be trying to communicate. Allow them time to find the words.

### **Finding their way**

People with dementia can sometimes forget their way or become disorientated. They may need help to find their way around. It would be appropriate for those affected in this way to be accompanied by a carer (who could be a family member or friend). This must be the case for all walking groups and any other outdoor activities or visits where the person could become lost.

### **Every day can be different.**

For some people with dementia what they can do changes from day to day, so how you support them may need to be different every time.

### **When no longer able to enjoy and benefit from the activity**

It may come to the stage where the person is no longer able to enjoy and benefit from attending a specific interest group. It may be worth considering whether a different interest group may now be more appropriate. so it would be helpful to discuss this with them in a sensitive way. Prior to any such discussion you might find it helpful to talk first to the Group Co-ordinator or any committee member.