

Express Yourself! Conversations that Enable Personal Expression

The logo features the word "RIGHTS" in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font. To the right of "RIGHTS" is a stylized blue hand icon with a red heart in the palm. Below "RIGHTS" and the hand icon, the phrase "Made Real in Care Homes" is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. The entire logo is centered within a light blue rectangular box, which is itself centered on a solid magenta background.

RIGHTS 
Made Real in Care Homes

Express Yourself ! is a document which describes 3 themes connected to ways in which people working in care homes enable people living in care homes to express themselves.

The themes and stories are inspired by conversations with staff working in Chester House, Glasgow, Oakbridge Care Home, Glasgow and Crookston Residential Home, Tranent.

These conversations took place as part of the exploration of the Human Right to Personal Expression, within the Rights Made Real in Care Homes project www.rightsmadereal.org.uk.

Express Yourself!

Conversations that Enable Personal Expression

Nothing New to Read Here!!

The themes and stories presented below will be familiar to people who work, visit and live in care homes up and down Scotland.

After each story are some questions - you are invited to see if something new or different pops up for you from reflecting on these stories using the questions.

Theme 1: The Right to Change Our Mind

#Options #EverChanging #GoodToCheckIn

Conversations where the person is supported to do something different, or think differently, than what their normal routine might be.

Being aware of a person's preferences and normal routine is such an important aspect of personcentredness. The story below illustrates how in our relationships we can also help people discover other options, that they maybe hadn't considered before.

An Everyday Story

I went to Jean's* room and asked her if she would like to have a bath or her breakfast first today. She has been in the routine of having her breakfast first, and her bath after – I didn't want to take it for granted that this was what she would like everyday. She was a bit surprised by my question. She said she never thought of doing it the other way round, and asked what I thought. I said both are good options, though my Gran always said that you don't have a bath on a full belly. She thought this was sound advice, and that she'd like to try going with the bath first. She was delighted with the experience, and thought she might try doing it this way round again.

Pop-Up Questions

- What do you imagine, might have helped this staff member to have this conversation, in this way?
- What opportunities could you create to share stories about 'breaking from the routine' or 'new things I learned about *Jean* today'?
- While the theme or story may be familiar, has reading the story sparked any different thought or idea for you?

Express Yourself!

Conversations that Enable Personal Expression

Theme 2: Ask the Experts

#SharingWisdom #HiddenGems #InTheMomentExpertise

Conversations where we are genuinely curious and eager to tap into the different types of knowledge, skills, experience and wisdom of residents, to support people to feel valued and purposeful.

The story below gives an example of finding out about someone's expertise that stems from their career. As well as tapping into knowledge or experience that requires memory, there are numerous other ways in which staff in care homes tap into the in-the-moment expertise of residents: asking a resident who values her appearance for advice when getting a new haircut, asking a resident who likes the outdoors if they think it looks like it will rain, getting help caring for plants, asking for suggestions on what you should buy your Uncle for his birthday.

An Everyday Story

I was new to the Unit and was meeting George for the first time. I had heard he was a quiet man of few words. He had been up since the crack of dawn and was dozing in his chair, and I was curious and asked him why he got up so early. He said he had been a farmhand all his life, and this was what he was used to. I'm not familiar with the farming world, and so I asked him what the difference between a farmer and a farmhand is- this led to a lengthy discussion where George went into great detail to help me understand farming life. He seemed to thrive on sharing this information with me.

Pop-Up Questions

What for you were the key ingredients of what this staff member did, that helped George to open up in this conversation?

Have you stories or examples of tapping into the expertise of people living in care homes?

While the theme or story may be familiar, has reading the story sparked any different thought or idea for you?

Express Yourself!

Conversations that Enable Personal Expression

Theme 3: Going with the Flow

#EverythingIsUseful #NoWrongAnswer #BuildingOnWhatComesUp

Conversations where moving away from needing to remember facts, details, information opens up room for imagination & playfulness- where all ideas are welcome.

An Everyday Story*

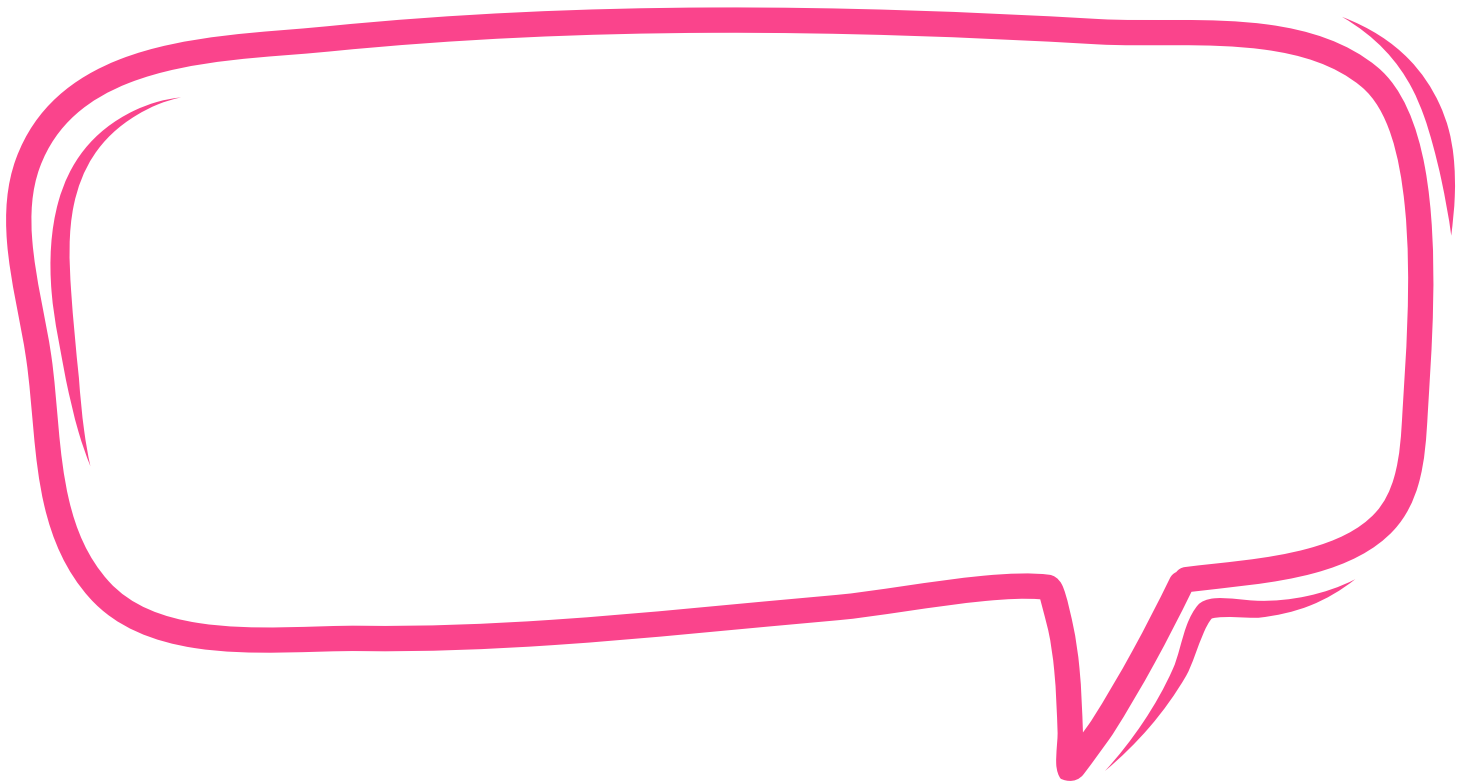
I was asking residents for help in planning an intergenerational visit from a local nursery. I had the idea we could use Red Riding Hood- the residents seemed to like this plan and so we went about thinking about the story. Some residents felt like it was a memory test, like they had to get the exact detail of the original fairytale right. I said instead of remembering the story, maybe we could take bits from the original story and add our own bits. Any suggestions that the residents made were brought in. There were so many laughs with us all putting old bits and new bits of the story together; it was a source of pride when resident's ideas became part of the story. And so our very own version of Red Riding Hood included jiving at the Palais, pigs, Robin Hood and a snowball contest!!!

Pop-Up Questions

- What did you like in what you read in the story?
- The person in the story welcomed all suggestions, and followed the flow of where the residents were going- what helps you to 'go with the flow' and be imaginative and playful, when in conversation with residents?
- While the theme or story may be familiar, has reading the story sparked any different thought or idea for you?

*This story was gathered as part of the Intergenerational Play & Storytelling project in Rights Made Real, facilitated by Suzie Ferguson and Loreen Pardoe.

Based on what you've read in this document, and your own experience of conversations which support personal expression for people living in care homes, have you anything else you would like to add on this topic?



Over to You