Getting Things Changed Together: co-researching communication

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The Forget-me-Not Research Group WITH

E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Disability Rights UK

University of BRISTOL

This is us

Getting Things Changed

The Forget-me-Not Research Group WITH

Getting Good Support

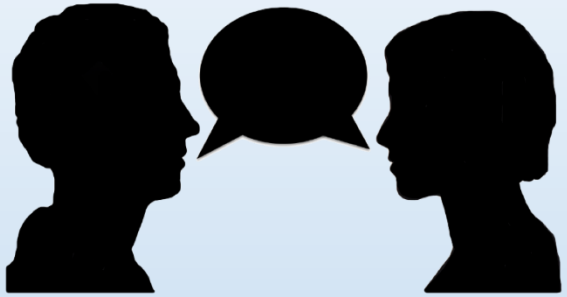
- **Our evidence:** videos of what is 'actually happening'. Looking at fine detail of how people communicate (verbally and non-verbally)

- **Dementia groups (activity groups, memory cafes, cars…) carers, friends, staff**

Different types of data

Group talks about communication

Interviews with people with dementia and/or their conversation partners



Filming natural interactions

Reflective interviews

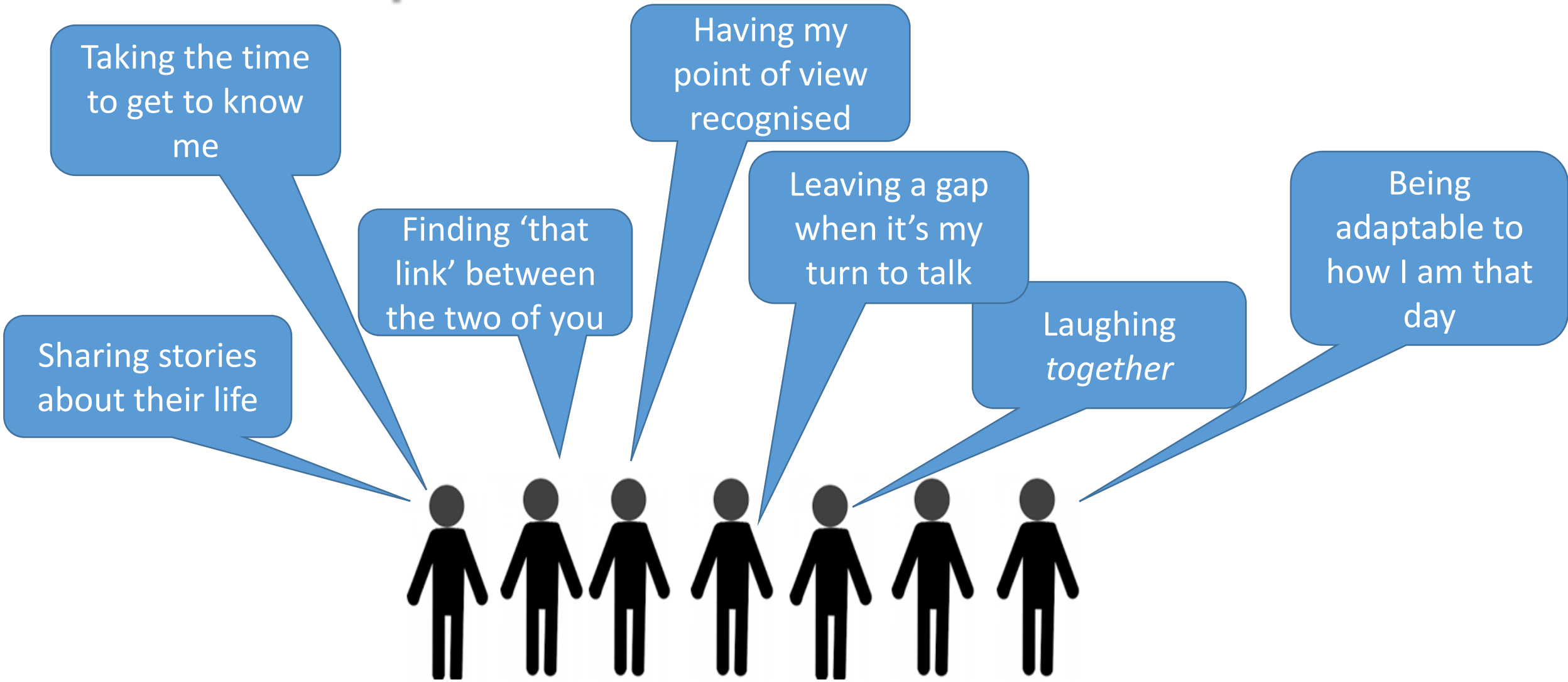
How the Forget-me-Nots got involved

Findings

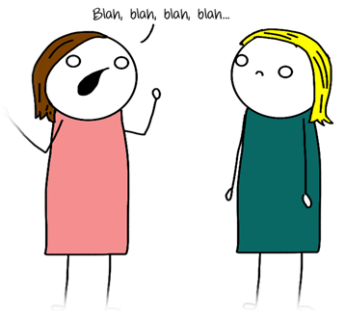
"If there is one rule that can be applied consistently in dementia care, it is that there are no rules that can be applied universally"

(Zgola, 1999, p.100)

What do people with dementia themselves tell us is important about communication?



What is conversation analysis?



Question design

Questions do a complex job in conversation

Do you remember what you used to do for your job?

What assumptions are built into that?

Quizzes – one example

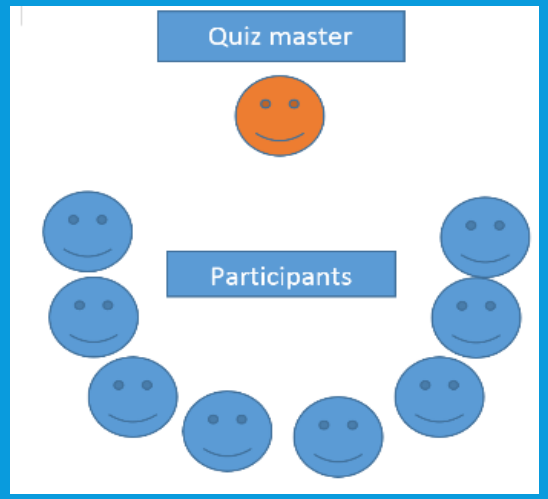
What was the TV quiz which used the slogan: 'Double your money and take it away'?

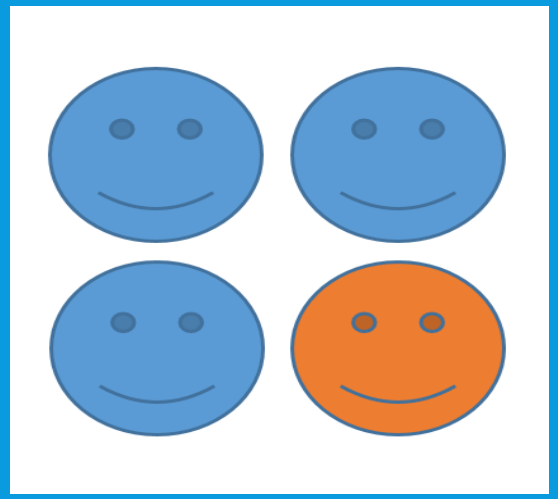
How else could I have done that quiz?

Turn-taking

- Taking turns in groups can be difficult, for people with and without dementia
- To take a turn in a conversation, either you 'self select' or you are selected
- Often, interaction is organised by activities. What does an activity do to the shape on interaction and possibilities for participation?

Interaction is big groups is difficult for any group of people – e.g – 5 way conversation are a 'maximum' for conversation given distance/acoustics (Summer, 1961)





Doing an activity shapes the interactional space – this can create room for actions led by person with dementia,
or close them down

Answer design

When you ask a question, an answer is 'preferred' (Sacks, 1974)

A: Do you like my dress?
B: (SILENCE)

Questions limit the scope of what answer is possible

Would you like a cup of tea? = Y/N
What would you like to drink? = Open

Often the Q & A roles are prescribed

People can do creative things to fulfil the requirement of the Q&A sequence

Answering with non-specific answers

What happens when a person can't answer the question asked of them?

Video – training materials

Our recommendations

- More people with dementia should get personal budgets, so that they can have one-one support and better personalised care. That would help better communication to happen.
- There should be more groups like the Forget-me-Not centre, where people with dementia can make their own decisions.
- Staff or supporters can help people to make decisions, by supporting them and talking about their choices.
- People with dementia can help to lead training for staff and supporters. The training videos we have made will help them.
- Talking about the past should not become like a test, but it should be fun. It's also important to talk about the here-and-now. People with dementia are leading interesting lives and have plenty to say.
- Skills for Care and others involved in training should promote more 'equal' conversations where staff and clients can share experiences and memories.

What next?

We want to hear from you – what would be useful for you?

How could we share our findings successfully?

Where would they be useful?

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