

48th World Congress on

Advanced Nursing Research

June 14-15, 2018 | Dublin, Ireland

Former work life and people with dementia

Bente Nordtug¹, Karin Torvik¹, Hildfrid V Brataas¹, Are Holen² and Birthe Loa Knizek²¹Nord University, Norway²NTNU - Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

People with dementia often wish to be treated with acceptance and respect in spite of their illness. The more dementia advances, the greater the need is to hold the pieces of the past together in the person's current memory. Mapping a person's life story and identifying areas of personal relevance can help caregivers to understand their background; it may also help them maintain a sense of positive self-esteem. Thus, the work-related narratives of people with dementia may be used to counteract the effects of cognitive decline, even when a person's narratives seem insignificant to others. Twelve home dwelling persons in early stages of dementia were interviewed about their former work lives. The researcher recorded and took note of the participants' verbal narratives and observed facial, vocal, and emotional expressions while they shared their work narratives. Thematic content analyses of verbal utterances and non-verbal expressions were later interpreted with regard to the underlying meaning of the statements and momentary changes in the participants' self-esteem. During their lifetimes, all participants had been involved in several types of work: paid, unpaid, part-time, and full-time. Their motivation for choosing their past work was influenced by values of their contemporary culture. Mostly they narrated positive events from their paid work that underscored the importance of formal recognition and acknowledgement. However, they often felt that unpaid work was taken for granted and not fully recognized by family or society. Those who had come to terms with their illness had positive feelings about their past contributions in their former paid work. Some wrestled with accepting their illness; they were grieving their losses, regardless of former success. Caregivers may use parts of work narratives to elevate the self-esteem and quality of life of people with dementia.

Biography

Bente Nordtug works as an Associate University Professor at Nord University, at Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences. Her research topics are social support, caring burden and mental health of informal caregivers of people with chronic illnesses. As a Nurse, she is specialized in dementia caring.

bente.nordtug@nord.no