

## The Way Forward

Yesterday, Elaine and I had the privilege of attending what I would call the BEST conference I have ever been to so far!! Master classes on living well with Dementia were held on six separate tables, four times during the day (24 classes in total during the day) at each class different people sat at the table (it was a huge conference)

At each table sat a person (teacher) living with Dementia and the "Pupils" so to speak, were made up of Doctors, Consultants, Psychiatrist's, NHS Commissionaires' and local health workers.

IT WAS A DREAM COME TRUE!!

To be able to advise such people on how it REALLY is to live with this awful Disease and how we could, by working together improve things so much was an absolute privilege. Each one of us living with Dementia felt as if we were speaking for all those, all over the country who couldn't speak for themselves and made the best of every moment.

## **THIS WITHOUT DOUBT IS THE WAY FORWARD**

I explained that Dr's receptionists should be trained to be aware that when people are making appointments for those with memory impairments or confusion to advise people to make a double appointment (20mins instead of 10) Therefore not putting any extra pressure on the Gp's but giving the Patients a little more time to explain things.

I explained that after EVERY diagnosis of Dementia a follow up appointment should be made no longer than two weeks later

to answer any questions that they may have about Dementia, and believe me there are quite a few!!

And the most important point I made was that Dementia IS NOT an age related disease!! I asked THREE Doctors sat at my table if they regarded Dementia as this, and the answer was a resounding YES!!

“Very Worrying “

I also asked if the same Doctors had the confidence to give a diagnosis of Dementia at any age. This time they all said NO!!

“Even more worrying”

Now, 10 out of 10 for their honesty, but not really the answers I was looking for, BUT!! The discussion that followed on all the points I got across was very encouraging, and I don't say that too often!!

I was also asked to speak to the Whole conference at the end (it was a last minute arrangement, I was only asked to do it 15 mins before the closing speech) and to be honest I really made the most of it!!

As the opening headline says, this is the way forward, every professional I spoke to said they had got so much out of it. My “Angel” Elaine who was sat on a different table with the “Carers” point of view was told by the consultant running the conference that her workshop was the best he had been to during the day!! I am so proud of her.

So, my message to all you guys out there involved in "Dementia care" and all those that organise conferences regarding Dementia across the country

"MAKE THIS YOUR TEMPLATE!

Ask what we did, copy it to the letter, we don't mind!! Please involve people who are living with Dementia in all you, after all

## **WHO BETTER TO ASK?**

A very contented Norrms and Elaine xxxxxx