

## **Living well with dementia: what is possible and how to promote it**

In this paper we discuss living well with dementia. To write this paper we drew on research papers and input from people with dementia. We also included information collected as part of the IDEAL programme. That study looks at what helps people to 'live well' with dementia.

Many health policies and guidelines talk about living well with dementia. What does it mean to live well? How can we best support people?

Living well will mean different things to different people. We looked at the responses from 1372 people with dementia to the question "What does living well mean to you?" People talked about:

- Having an engaged and active lifestyle
- Having positive relationships with others
- Good living situation and environment
- Having security
- Getting on with life
- Being able to get out and about
- Having a positive outlook on life
- Being able to cope
- Having independence
- Having a purpose

Some of the people who answered this question did not feel they were living well. So, we need to consider what might help them. A lot of things could affect whether someone can live well with dementia. These could include a person's mental or physical health, independence, or relationships.

People with dementia need the right support to help them live well. We came up with some recommendations for health care professionals:

- An assessment of a person's needs must look at the whole person. It needs to consider for each person what impacts on their well-being.
- Ill-being is not an inevitable consequence of having dementia. A lot of things can influence a person's capability to live well. Some of these can be treatable with appropriate intervention and support.
- Healthcare professionals have a key role in raising awareness about dementia. They need to signpost people towards local support

services.

- Enabling people to live well requires a broad approach. This should include health and social systems and the wider community.

This is a summary of a [research article](#) which appeared in the **International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry** in September 2021.