

WHAT HELPS FAMILY CARERS OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH MILD-TO-MODERATE DEMENTIA TO 'LIVE WELL'? FINDINGS FROM THE IDEAL PROGRAMME.

We asked 1283 family carers (mostly spouses or partners) of people living with mild-to-moderate dementia to rate their quality of life, satisfaction with life, and well-being. We combined these ratings into one 'living well' score. We wanted to see which aspects of carers' lives are linked to being able to 'live well' with dementia.

We looked at seven areas of life, and found five were relevant to whether carers of people with dementia felt they could 'live well':



Psychological characteristics and psychological health: such as personality characteristics, optimism, self-esteem, loneliness and depression.



Physical fitness and physical health: such as lifestyle, physical activity and health conditions



Experiencing caregiving: such as care-related stress, feeling trapped, and coping.



Resources and assets: such as social networks and involvement in social and cultural activities.



Relationship with the person with dementia: the quality of the relationship between the carer and the person living with dementia.

TWO AREAS OF LIFE WERE NOT RELATED TO WHETHER CARERS FELT THEY WERE 'LIVING WELL':



Social situation: such as social class and perceived standing in one's community.



Managing everyday life with dementia: such as how distressed carers were about the symptoms of the person with dementia.

THE FINDINGS SUGGEST SEVERAL WAYS OF ENHANCING THE POTENTIAL FOR CARERS OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA TO 'LIVE WELL':



Positively support carers to feel good about themselves and retain a sense of optimism, and help them deal with low mood and depression.



Support carers to maintain or develop effective ways of coping, to manage the stresses of caregiving, and to feel positive about their relationship with the person with dementia.



Enable carers to find ways of keeping physically fit and ensure they have good access to health services.



Reduce isolation, increase participation in social and cultural activities and help carers to remain engaged with their local communities.