

Dance for Dementia

A partnership project between
North Bristol NHS Trust & University Hospitals Bristol & Weston

The Original Spinners are three dance practitioners with extensive training and experience of working with people with dementia in a creative, playful and enabling way.

Dance for Dementia began as a 6-week pilot project in Elgar Enablement Unit, Southmead Hospital through the Fresh Arts programme at North Bristol NHS Trust.

The project offers older, long stay patients enjoyment, engagement and an invitation to dance and move creatively, to keep active during a hospital stay and ultimately, we aim that engagement will help speed discharge / care pathway.





- The dancers offer patients creative dance and movement using a bespoke trolley filled with props, music soundtracks and a carefully planned and curated programme to stimulate engagement.
- Since 2022 the project has grown to offer weekly sessions at three Bristol hospital sites through partnership with UHBW Arts & Culture team and during this time has delivered over 500 hours of dance activity to over 3500 patients, visitors and staff.

Dance for Dementia film:

<https://youtu.be/BlzkNcvtkUM>

4 mins 15

- Helps create meaningful and joyful interactions, that are often, and importantly for people with Dementia, non-verbal
- Different props help patients engage in the movement activities – prop gives permission / reason to engage / move
- Patients more likely to engage when activity is offered as an 'invitation' rather than something that they *'have to do'*; respecting choice and freedom to engage in the way they want
- Patient happiness scores were measured using a visual observation of patient faces rated from 1-7, with higher scores meaning better mood. Measure was taken directly before and directly after the dancers were in the bay. On Elgar ward, since July 2022, average mood scores at baseline were 4.21 (neutral unresponsive) and scores immediately after the dancers were in the bay were 5.3 (satisfied, focused, alert, relaxed, content). This is a 1.09 unit increase in mood scores overall



- This is better than a hundred pills
- Better than a shot of morphine
- I think its beautiful and made me smile! I love that I remember dancing with many of the patients that were using the props and loved the Monday afternoons before their discharge – Bethany Deverson, Sister, Elgar 1
- I love it!! Amazing support for our patients.
- A totally unexpected, delightful afternoon, it brightens the day. (Patient)
- I feel better already (patient)

- We were told by staff that one of the patients had been looking for us the day before our session and was really excited to join in, he joined us in his bay and came through to join us in the next bay too.
- 'Life is full of surprises and this was a very nice one. I haven't laughed that much in my whole life!'
- 'You light up our lives.'
- 'I thought I had passed on, you are like angels.'
- 'What a special treat.'
- 'I feel a healthier and happier.'
- 'I wanted you to stay, I really enjoyed it.'

- *That was lovely, you should come every day'*
- *I'm shattered, I'm not a dancer, don't usually go in for that kind of thing, but I will try anything and that was great!*
- One lady who we had worked with before was asleep when we arrived, she woke up for the last part of what we were doing and was disappointed that she had missed some of it and said *'Please wake me up next time, I was looking forward to that'*.
- *You're a ray of sunshine. That almost made me cry to see him being like that and dancing means the world to me, it was extraordinary. Thank you so very much.*
(A visitor talking about arriving and seeing a family member engaged in dancing - she told us that he was at the end of life, so it was amazing for the family to see.)