

CREATING A LIFE STORY

A Guide for Family, Friends and Support Staff

A Life Story book can be used as a tool to help facilitate person-centred care. It enables caregivers to engage and communicate with a person living with dementia, understand their unique needs, and provide meaningful interaction based on the person's likes and dislikes and personal history.

Using the information contained in a Life Story book, as well as accompanying photographs and pictures, caregivers can :

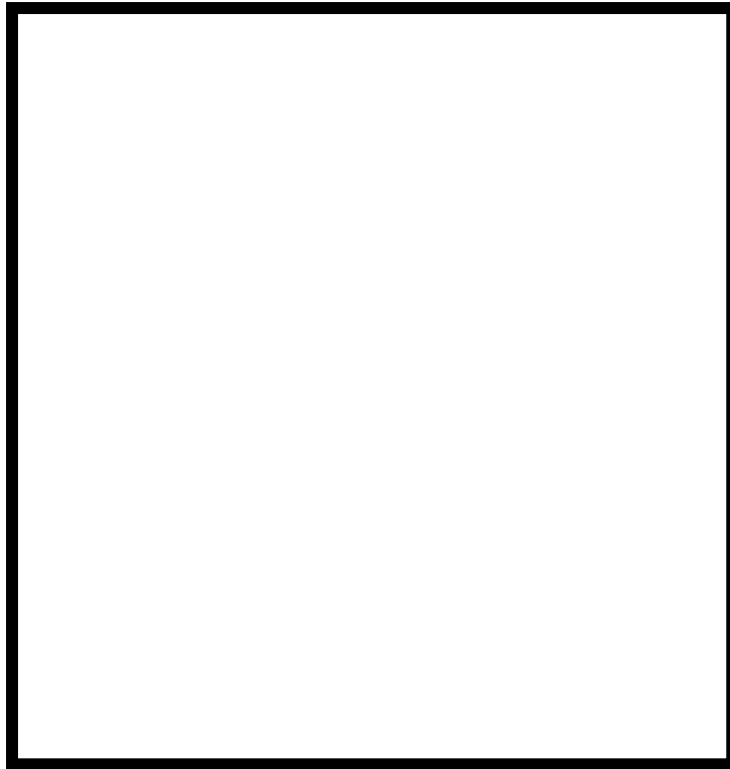
- bring comfort to a person who is upset
- support social interaction
- celebrate important achievements
- help focus the person's attention on pleasant memories
- calm someone who is overwhelmed by a new environment
- support mental stimulation
- build closer relationships with the people in their care

Life Story books are particularly useful for new caregivers. They provide a quick reference guide into the person's individual preferences, and give insight into historical events that may impact on their reactions to certain stimuli and situations.

It is advised that you make three copies to be shared with caregivers when in respite, and keep a spare at home for the family. Should the person with dementia require hospital treatment, it is a good idea to take a copy of their Life Story to assist medical staff.

The template on the following pages lists common questions and prompts that can be used to create a Life Story book. In general, it is advised that information displayed in the book be of a positive nature, avoiding tragic events and memories that may cause the person distress or emotional upheaval.

When using photographs and other personal ephemera, it is best to make photocopies, rather than use originals. These are often rare and irreplaceable and may become damaged or lost.



(Insert Photo)

MY LIFE STORY

Full Name :

I Prefer to be Called :

BACKGROUND

I was born on (date) _____

in (place of birth) _____.

Mother's name : _____

Father's name : _____

I had _____ brothers and sisters.

Their names are : _____

My Mother worked as a _____

My Father worked as a _____

Other relatives that lived with us : _____

DESCRIPTION of MY EARLY YEARS

(Include photos if available)

My childhood home was (descriptions eg small home, apartment, farm, in the centre of town, isolated, noisy, quiet, tidy, run-down etc) _____

My favourite toys were _____

My favourite pets (if any) were _____

Games I liked to play include _____

My best friend(s) in school was/were _____

In school, my favourite subjects were _____

When I grew up, I wanted to be a _____

MY WORKING LIFE

(Include photos if available)

My first job was (may include home duties/chores) _____

Other jobs I had include _____

My favourite job was _____

I worked there for (years/months) _____

Friends I made at work include _____

My least favourite job was _____

I didn't like it because _____

My Family & Friends

(Include photos if available)

My wife/husband/partner's (if applicable) **name is** _____

We first met in (year) _____

(If married) **We were married in** (year) _____

at (location) _____

Our wedding was (describe eg small gathering, church ceremony, weather, food served, number of bridesmaids, the dress etc)

Our first home together was in _____

We have _____ **children** (if applicable).

Their names are _____

Favourite pets (if applicable) _____

TRAVEL & HOLIDAYS

(Include photos/postcards etc if available)

Places I have travelled to include _____

My favourite holiday ever was _____

My favourite way to travel is (eg car/boat/plane) _____

As a child, I spent my holidays _____

ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

Hobbies I enjoy _____

Sports I enjoy playing / watching _____

Music or radio programs I like to listen to _____

Places I like to visit (eg cafes, concerts, the zoo, parks, shopping centres, library etc) _____

Movies / Television programs I enjoy _____

IMPORTANT LIFE EVENTS

(For example : achievements in education, loss of a loved one, moving house, emigrating, wars, injury or illness, political events, etc)

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the user to list their important life events. The box is currently blank.

Personal Care

During the day, I like to wear (eg slacks and jumper, skirts, loungewear, suits etc) _____

I prefer baths/showers

I like my hair to be washed daily/every other day/weekly

I enjoy wearing makeup / perfume / aftershave / nail polish

My favourite scents include (eg lavender, rose, citrus, vanilla)

I do not like / am allergic to (eg perfumes, heavily scented soap/ essential oils) _____

Other personal care routines that are important to me _____

Likes & Dislikes

Foods I like to eat _____

Foods I do not like _____

Activities I do not enjoy participating in _____

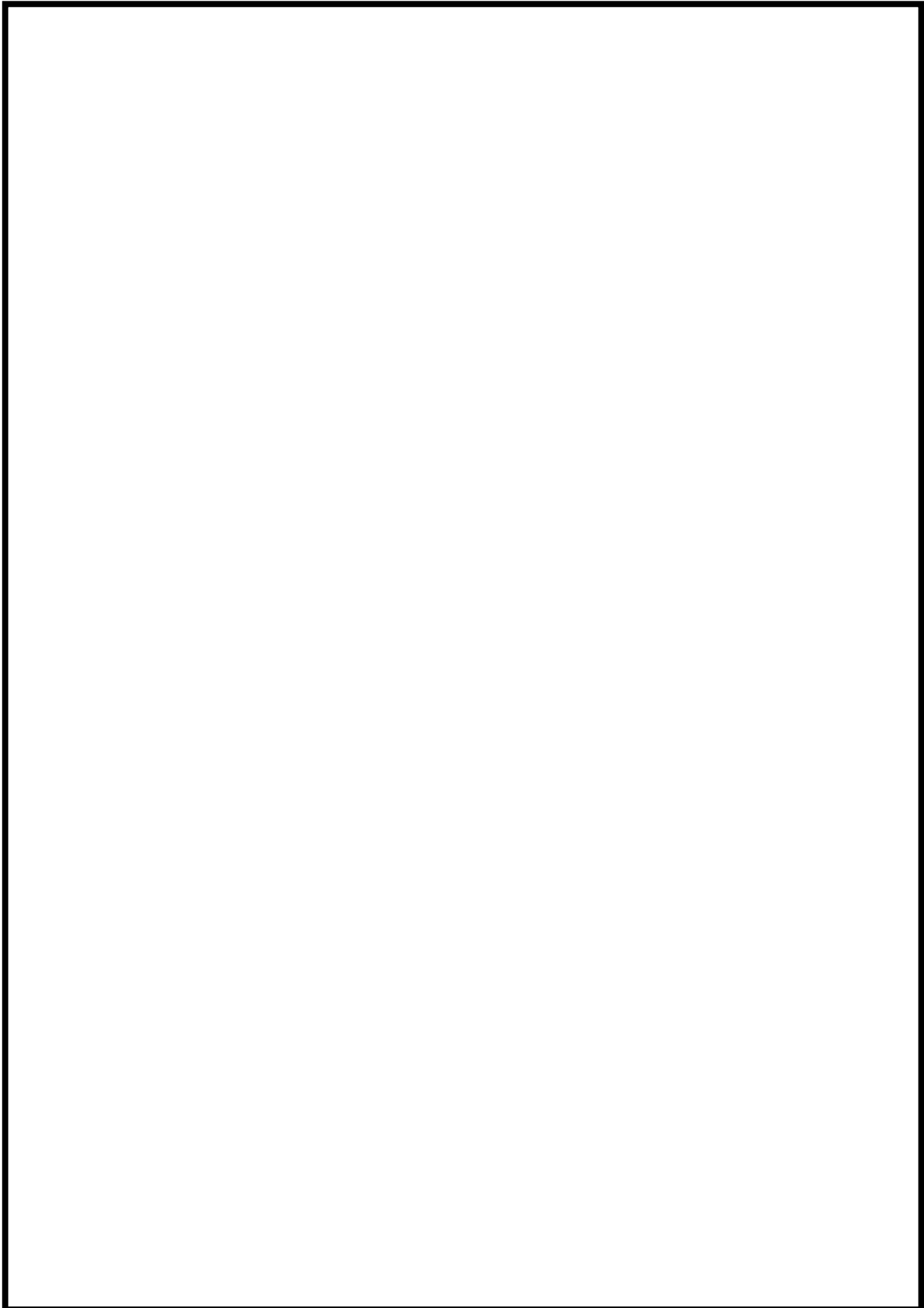
Things that upset me (eg loud noises, darkness, animals, being touched)

Topics I like talking about (eg family, pets, art, gardening, music) _____

Things that help me to relax (eg listening to music, massage, holding someone's hand) _____

People Who Are Important To Me Now

(State name and relationship and include photos if available)

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the user to write names and relationships and to include photos of important people.

MY HEALTH

Use this section to list any health concerns or conditions eg diabetes, heart problems, food allergies, vertigo, arthritis, depression etc

I **do / do not** have an Advance Health Directive.

Important Contact Numbers :

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alzheimer’swa
the dementia experts