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.
MY LIFE STORY

Full Name:

I Prefer to be Called:
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)

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<tr>
<th>Places I have travelled to include</th>
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<tr>
<th>My favourite holiday ever was</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My favourite way to travel is (eg car/boat/plane)</th>
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<th>As a child, I spent my holidays</th>
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</table>
Hobbies I enjoy _____________________________
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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)
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)
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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