

New handbook on Difficult Conversations in Dementia will help clinicians have discussions with patients

The latest handbook by Clive Lewis OBE DL has been published with the aim of increasing the skills and confidence of healthcare professionals who are facing difficult conversations with dementia patients and their families.

Cases of dementia are multiplying and with 800,000 sufferers in the UK and 32 million around the world, the need for healthcare professionals to engage in difficult conversations is increasing. From diagnosis to end-of-life planning, such as writing a will and appointing power of attorney, difficult conversations on a range of topics are required for each and every dementia patient. However, alongside the rise in case numbers another worrying trend has been revealed – those tasked with carrying out these difficult conversations are either having them too late or even putting them off entirely. The handbook will help the achievement of Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUIN) improvement goals agreed between Trusts and Commissioners introduced by the Department of Health in 2009.

‘Difficult Conversations in Dementia: A Ten Step Toolkit for Clinicians Involved in End of Life Discussions’ has been honed and critiqued by GP’s and the jargon-free handbook provides practical and realistic advice to provide an indispensable tool for healthcare professionals. The new handbook is based on the widely acclaimed ‘Difficult Conversations 10 Steps to Becoming a Tackler not a Dodger’, which featured in The Sunday Times.

The publication of this pragmatic handbook coincides with the announcement of considerations for new guidelines for local authorities and health trusts to give people diagnosed with dementia an opportunity to discuss options for care at the end of their life as early as possible, while they still have the capacity. Clive says ‘difficult conversations in dementia are more common than in other areas of healthcare. This handbook follows warnings that up to 100,000 dementia patients each year are denied the chance of dying at home, surrounded by loved ones because difficult conversations about their preferences for end of life care never took place. I hope the book will be of much benefit to clinicians, patients, carers and families’.

Note to Editors:

About the author

- Clive Lewis is founder of Healthcare HR Solutions and Globis Mediation Group.
- He has written seven books on topics including workplace mediation, difficult conversations, performance management and redundancy.
- He was awarded the OBE for Public Service in the Queen's Birthday Honours List of 2011, and appointed as Deputy Lieutenant of Gloucestershire in 2012.
- He is a non-executive director at an NHS Foundation Trust, a Trustee and Board-Member of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, and Honorary Secretary of the Civil Mediation Council.
- During 2006-2009, his commitment to charity work led to him being appointed as Chair of a Government appointed independent panel exploring the rising costs of youth underachievement. The Panel produced the REACH report.

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For further information please visit <http://tacklingdifficultconversations.com/sector-specific-courses/for-healthcare/>

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