

# DEMENTIA FOR ALL



THE BIG AND  
THE SMALL

## GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS

RELATING TO THE MATERIAL  
4TH - 6TH GRADE

### PREPARATION

4th - 6th grade is a big jump. We therefore recommended that you, as the teacher, arrange the material a little, choosing what you think is best suited for the level of the class. We also recommend that you sort and leave out material – all depending on how much time you have or what is relevant for you to focus on.

So look through the material and if required, become familiar with the extra material you can read by using the link at the end of the guide. Proceeding like this, you can put the lesson together.

You can even contact your local dementia coordinator in the municipality and ask if they will take the class together with you or you can contact the Alzheimer's Association, who may be able to put you in touch with a young person who has a parent who has dementia. The young person may share with the class what it is like to have a loved one who has dementia.

#### Questions for the class to consider a couple of days before the lesson starts:

On...[ e.g. Monday ] ... we will have a lesson about dementia.

- Do any of you know what dementia is?
- Do any of you know someone who has dementia?

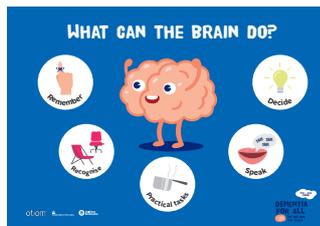
(Are there some children in the class who have a loved one who has dementia? If this is the case, it is important you read the article that comes with the material. It explains how you can provide even more support to these children and young people).

During the testing of the learning material, there were typically children in the 1st - 3rd grade age group who knew someone who had dementia – for example, a grandparent, great-grandparent, neighbour, or knew that the prince consort, Prince Henrik of Denmark, had been diagnosed with dementia.

### THE ACTUAL LESSON

#### Start of the lesson

- Do any of you know what dementia is?
- Do any of you know someone who has dementia?
- How can you see if someone has dementia? Can you sense it?
- Can you tell someone has dementia just by looking at them? No. Dementia is an illness that affects the brain.



# WHAT CAN THE BRAIN DO?

When you are born, your brain cannot do very much. It is like a blank canvas, and it can only tell us that we are hungry, cold, tired, etc. When this happens we cry until a grown up finds out why we are crying. Small babies cannot ride a bike, play chess or any of the other things that we do. We learn how to do all of those things during our childhood. Our brain is finished growing and learning when we are about 20 years old.

Let's take a look at what the brain can do (slide 4-9)



Our brains function like your computer system's desktop screen. They have folders with different things in them, which you save when you have done something. For example, a folder might be called schoolwork. Another folder might be called Counterstrike or Minecraft. Another folder might be for holidays, etc. When you play Counterstrike, you learn to move back and forward, how to shoot, change weapons, etc. If this is not saved in your memory, you would have to start from scratch every time you started to play the game again. So there are things saved in the folder Counterstrike – ready to be used the next you play the game. But you cannot save everything forever. You have to tidy up and throw stuff out once in a while. There is just not enough space for everything. Things that are not so important get deleted from the folders at regular intervals, and other things are saved in your long-term memory – the things you want to remember. They are saved on our 'hard drives' and become our long-term memories.

And that's how it is with all of the things you experience at school every day. Some things get quickly removed. For example, how it feels to sit on the chair you are sitting on right now. It is not saved in your memory, unless the chair you are sitting on is really uncomfortable or amazingly comfy. Out of all of the thousands of times you played football outside during breaks, only a few of them are saved in your memory. The memories that are saved are the times you scored a goal, were hurt or experienced something that felt more emotional and made the situation more memorable compared to all of the other times.



From when we are very small, our brains learn to recognise things and know what they are used for. When we see a chair for the first time, we have to be shown what it is used for. Later on, we encounter another kind of chair and find out that it is also for sitting on, even though it does not look like the first chair we used. As we grow up, we learn to know what almost everything is used for just by looking at it. We recognise things because we have used them before.



How you do things is also something your brain helps you with. We practice in putting on our clothes, and eating food using a fork and knife or chopsticks. We learn how to spread butter on our bread and to do many other things. In the morning, when you get up and get your toothbrush and brush your teeth, it is your brain that has learned to do this. It is something you practice and get better at. Are there other things that you are practicing at doing right now? For example, using a skateboard or roller skates or ice skates? The more times you do something, the better your brain gets at doing the thing.

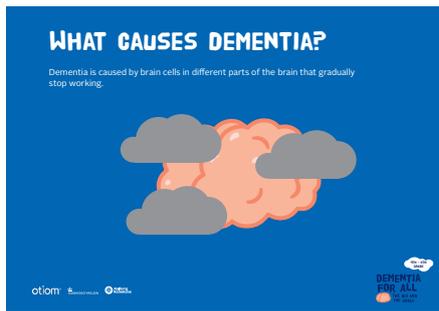


Babies cannot speak. This is also something your brains learn to do. Are there some of you who have a baby brother or sister who has not learned to speak yet? How do they speak? Perhaps your baby brother says "marel" instead of "mackerel". For example, try to say this quickly: "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood." You need to be good at words to say it. You need to practice. Many toddlers spend a lot of time pointing and asking: "What's that?" They are practising at talking and saying the words.



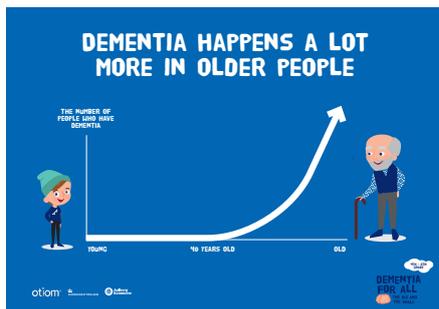
The last part of our brains that finishes developing is the part that helps us to make decisions. In other words, our ability to think carefully about something before we do it. But it also helps us to concentrate a great deal. Your brains are not actually very good at those things yet and this is quite normal. In fact, it is not until you are about 18 years old before you can use that part of your brain really well. Right now, you are practicing. For example, you practice at not fighting when you and a friend have a fall out. How many times in a week do you think there is a little fight at school? And how many times in a week do you think there is a fight in the staff room? Yes, you learn that you must not fight when you get angry but remember instead to think again, and to talk things over rather than fight. You learn that it is sensible to eat vegetables and not sweets just before dinner and other boring things like that. But you also find it hard to concentrate for long periods of time. This is why it is often a good idea that you do not just sit and listen to your teacher all the time, but instead you also make things and do stuff now and then.

# WHAT CAUSES DEMENTIA?



Dementia is caused by many different diseases or injuries that affect the brain. There are a lot of different types of dementia. Alzheimer's disease is a well-known one. There are other kinds too, for example, Vascular dementia and Lewy Body dementia. All of these different types of dementia share one thing in common even though their exact causes are not fully understood – the brain's ability to function steadily declines. Gradually, more and more functions of the brain stop working. This means that we can do less and less because our brain's cannot do it. Because the damage is inside our brains, you cannot just look at a person who has dementia and know that they are ill. But you can begin to work it out when they do things differently compared to what other people normally do.

# DEMENTIA HAPPENS A LOT MORE IN OLDER PEOPLE



Children and young people do not get dementia. But people who are around 40 years old and older are at a greater risk of developing dementia. This means that people who develop dementia are mostly old people. This was why people in the past thought dementia was something that happened to you when you grew old. But this is not true. Many old people do not develop dementia.

# WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO HAVE DEMENTIA?



How do you feel when your mum or dad wants you to hurry up? Do you get mad or upset?

Talk with the children about how they would prefer it if other people did something else instead of keep correcting their mistakes, hurrying them up all the time, saying that they are doing something wrong, have forgotten something... and so on.

So how do you think people with dementia feel?  
See the film on the webpage.

# WHAT CAN GRANDMOTHER STILL DO?



Do you remember that your brain remembers like a computer? It saves all of the memories? It still works when you have dementia. All of the things from your past that are saved in your brain are saved for a long time and dementia does not destroy these memories. There are also other parts of the brain that work well: You can feel and move.



This means that there are still many things that you can do together with other people, to have fun together, while living with dementia. Talk with the children about what they usually do with their grandparents and great-grandparents. Children and their grandparents can continue to do many of the things they normally do together. Children cannot play difficult card games like bridge and people who have dementia can struggle with those kinds of card games too, but they can perhaps still play Go Fish or Ludo with their grandchild.

Talk with the children about whether they have heard any funny stories from when their grandparents were young and about things that are in the pictures.



**If you need some inspiration:  
Exercise sheet 1 and 3 are used here.**

The picture of the cigarette case for example: When our great-grandfathers were young, they were typically given a cigarette case as a confirmation present, because now they were grown up and should smoke like all the other grown-ups. Or what about dough ball makers or a sock repair kits. What happens today if you get a hole in your sock? When you make soup, do you make dough balls for the soup or do you buy them frozen in a bag?



**Fact list task sheet 1**

- 1: Milk bottle
- 2: Curling tongs
- 3: Sock repair kit
- 4: Trousers clip for riding a bicycle
- 5: Piggy bank
- 6: Cigarette case
- 7: Dough ball maker
- 8: Traditional herb chopper

# TAKE CARE OF YOUR BRAIN



You can do many things to take care of your brain:

- 1:** Eat healthy foods so the brain gets energy to grow.
- 2:** Exercise so the brain gets lots of oxygen to think with.
- 3:** Sleep well, so the brain gets the peace and quiet it needs to sort all of the things that are placed inside the treasure chest during the day.
- 4:** Keep using your brain, just like the way you exercise to get bigger muscles. Learn something new every day.

# HOW CAN YOU HELP SOMEONE WHO HAS DEMENTIA?



If you do not know someone who has dementia, you might see someone in town who has dementia. Sometimes people with dementia can find it really difficult finding their way around because they are not very good at recognising the streets they need to walk along to get home. If you see a person who looks like they are lost, tell your parents. Perhaps you heard on the radio that someone is lost. Remember to pay attention to where you saw the person and what the person was wearing. You can then tell the people who are looking for the person – and make it easier for them to find the missing person.

Task sheets 3 and 4 can be used here.



### Task sheet 3 guidance:

Task 3 is about stressing the pupils, so they experience confusion, frustration and impatience. We try to put them in a situation where, based on the feelings they experience, they can work out what a person who has dementia needs. You can therefore beneficially combine this task with slide 10.

Split the class into two groups if there are a lot of children in the class.

#### Procedure:

#### Preparation:

- Place a note somewhere in a classroom (red paper or other colour) on which you have written: It rained all day and the cow was nice.
- At the other end of the room place sheets of paper and pencils and a small box to put the written notes in (so no one can see what anyone else wrote on their piece of paper).
- Place a bowl filled with Plus-Plus shapes or centicubes on the table and place disposable cups next to the bowl.
- There must be masks that make it difficult to see out of or cheap sunglasses (a mask or pair of sunglasses for each child doing the task).
- You must also have Hama beads or uncooked popcorn to put in the children's shoes.

Let us say that there are 10 children (the rest can perhaps sit in another classroom and do task 4).

- Five children act as a team of bystanders and they take out their smartphones and play loud music on them, so there is lots of noise. If they do not have smartphones, then perhaps they can make some kind of noise.
- The other five children who are the team who have to do the task, have to put five Hama beads in one of their shoes and wear masks/sunglasses.
- These five children shall now be told their task:

#### Say the following:

I am now going to tell you what you have to do. I will only say it once and I will not answer any questions afterwards. So listen carefully.

- In the room there is a red note with something written on it. Read what is written on the note and go over to the empty sheets of paper and take a sheet of paper and write the sentence you read on the sheet of paper. Then put your sheet of paper in the box.

- There is a bowl with centicubes. Take three red, three blue and three yellow centicubes and put them in a glass.
- Go over to the door and stand on your right leg and count out loud to 17.
- You have ten minutes to do all of these things.
- You can do the things in any order that you want.

#### Get going!

When you can see that there is about one task left, you can start to say: "Now there is only one minute left" (even though there is more time than that left). And when they are about to be finished, start to count down from ten to zero. Ideally, there can be perhaps one child who has finished.

#### During the exercise, you take notes:

What do they say while they carry out the tasks? Do they make mistakes? What else?

Afterwards, swap the teams and repeat the exercise.

The group then swaps with the group in the other classroom.

After everyone has done the exercise, the class goes over what happened.

#### Ask:

What was it like?

Usually they answer that it was difficult or uncomfortable, etc. But if they answer: "It was easy to do," then tell them what you observed and wrote down during the exercise.



Now write on the board what they say and ask them what they felt and write that in a column and afterwards ask them what could have made the exercise easier and write their answers in a column:

## HOW DID IT FEEL?

- It was difficult to remember what was said
- It was horrible with all the noise. I could not concentrate
- I could not remember the sentence
- I became irritated
- There was not enough time
- It was rubbish that we were not able to ask questions
- We didn't get ten minutes. You cheated
- And so on ...

### **If no one says anything, you could say what you may have observed:**

- Some of you watched what the others did because you could not remember what to do.
- I heard a lot of swearing and complaining.
- There were mistakes with the centicubes.

## WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE TO MAKE THINGS EASIER?

- One task at a time
- Get help along the way
- No time pressure
- No noise
- To understand time (people who have dementia have difficulty having a sense of time)
- To look and see what other people do is a good solution to a task (it is called mirroring and people with dementia do it if they find something difficult, e.g. choosing food in a cafeteria. So they look around and see what the others do and they do the same).
- And so on ...

**The last column will thus be a good checklist for how to help people with dementia.**

# OTHER MATERIAL

## Kahoot Quiz

Dementia for All – the big and the small 4th - 6th grade quiz link:

<https://create.kahoot.it/share/demens-imens-4-6/0136f217-5d7d-417e-9d48-92390cb6ac52>

## How to do Kahoot quizzes about dementia in the class

To start, open the quiz by clicking on the link on your own computer. When the webpage is open, click the button “Play as guest” or just “Play” if you have played Kahoot before and have logged in. Select “Classic” or “Team mode”, depending on whether the pupils shall give individual answers or answer as a team.

2 A six-digit code will appear on the screen/projector screen (GAME PIN), which the pupils shall use to join in and take part in the quiz. The pupils shall use their iPads, computers or smartphones to go to [www.kahoot.it](http://www.kahoot.it) and log in by entering the six-digit code in the field “GAME PIN”. The pupils then enter their names and click on “OK, go”.

3 On your own device display screen, you can see how many of the pupils have clicked on “OK, go” and are thus ready to do the quiz. Once all of the pupils are ready, you start the quiz by clicking “Start” on the right side of the screen.

4 Now the question will be displayed on your screen/the class projector screen together with the possible answers, which are marked red, blue, yellow and green. The pupils can only see on their own screens the four colours which represent each of the possible answers on your screen/projector screen and which they can click on. Once all of the pupils have answered or if the time to answer has expired, the correct answer is shown. You can then click on “Next” to proceed to the points board and “Next” again to proceed to the next question.

5 You continue like this until all of the questions have been answered and at the end you can congratulate the winner. The pupils get a point for every correct answer and a bonus point for answering correctly in a row. Enjoy!

## DR Ultra did a feature about dementia

The broadcast focused on what it was like to be a child who has a parent who has dementia.

[www.dr.dk/ultra/ultranyt/maltes-far-har-demens-nu-flytter-han-paa-plejehjem](http://www.dr.dk/ultra/ultranyt/maltes-far-har-demens-nu-flytter-han-paa-plejehjem)

[www.dr.dk/ultra/ultranyt/faa-gode-raad-af-malthe](http://www.dr.dk/ultra/ultranyt/faa-gode-raad-af-malthe)

[www.dr.dk/ultra/ultranyt/quiz-sandt-eller-falsk-om-demens](http://www.dr.dk/ultra/ultranyt/quiz-sandt-eller-falsk-om-demens)

## “Når du kender én, der er demensramt “(When you know someone who has dementia)

- An article about dementia written for children:

The article is aimed at children aged 5- 10 years, but ideally, should be read with an adult, so both child and adult can talk together as they read the article.

<http://www.videnscenterfordemens.dk/viden-om-demens/bibliotek/bibliotek/biblioteksamlet/faglitteratur/demenspjece-for-boern-naar-du-kender-en-som-er-demensramt/>