

Talking Point chat room 12th February
Q&A on Changing Relationships, with Kim from our helpline

Mark_W	Hello to everyone we'll be starting our evening Q&A session with Kim at 7pm
Mark_W	Good evening everyone and welcome to our evening Q&A on Changing Relationships
Mark_W	our host this evening is Kim from our helpline
Kim.W	Hi everyone, my name is Kim and I am the supervisor for the evening helpline service. I'm happy to answer any of your questions about changing relationships this evening.:)
Mark_W	Does anyone have any questions to start off? :)
Mark_W	Ok I'll start us with one that's come in from Sarah via email
Mark_W	Sometimes my husband doesn't recognise me, he has pretty advanced Alzheimers and thinks I'm his nurse or even worse someone strange. It's not all the time but it takes him ages to calm down afterwards. Do you have any advice?
Kim.W	Hi Sarah, thank you for your email
Kim.W	I'm sorry to hear that your husband doesn't recognise you. As dementia progresses, people may get confused about who a loved one is or perhaps not recognise them at all. This can be really distressing and almost feel like a loss of identity for both of you.
Kim.W	If your husband is becoming particularly distressed at not recognising you, it may be more helpful to offer gentle reassurances to him rather than trying to convince him of who you really are. So for example you might focus on reassuring him that you are there to care for him.
Kim.W	It may also be that although he does not always recognise who you are, he senses that you are there to help him to be safe.
Mark_W	Thanks Kim
Mark_W	for reference we'll be saving a copy of the transcript of the talk on the forum here
Mark_W	http://forum.alzheimers.org.uk/showthread.php?67116-Chat-room-session-transcripts/page3
Mark_W	for anyone who wasn't able to catch us here
Mark_W	Does anyone have a question for Kim?
Mark_W	Here's another one from our email
Mark_W	I used to get on really well with my mother but since her dementia started to advance it's like she's a different person and she gets so angry with me now about the smallest things. I've started to dread visits to her sometimes. What can I do?
Mark_W	that's from Lucy
Kim.W	Hi Lucy, thanks for getting in touch. That sounds so upsetting, it is understandable that you dread her visits sometimes.
Kim.W	Dementia can cause changes in behaviour such as aggression because of the physical changes that are taking place in the brain. People with dementia can also become angry because they struggle to communicate when something is wrong.

Kim.W	It is really positive that you are able to acknowledge these feelings of dread, and it can be very helpful to have an outlet for these emotions, such as someone to talk to.
Kim.W	If you are struggling with your mother's aggression when she visits, it is ok to take a moment out, perhaps go to another room to take a moment and allow yourself to have these feelings.
Mark_W	Hi to the folks who've just joined us, we're taking questions on Changing Relationships this evening, with Kim from our helpline
Mark_W	here's an email question from robree
Mark_W	My father has had dementia for a few years now and we've not really told our children much about it all, is there anything you could tell us that might make it easier when we talk to them about it?
Kim.W	Hi Robree, sorry to hear that.
Kim.W	It's natural to want to protect children from difficult or upsetting situations, but often it's better to be open and honest with them about a loved one having dementia
Kim.W	Children can be very resilient and can often adapt very quickly to changes in their relationship to the person with dementia, as long as they understand why these changes are happening, and that it is not their fault.
Kim.W	For support on how to talk to children, there is the Alzheimer's Society factsheet on "Talking to Children and Young People about dementia" http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=108
Kim.W	Also, The Mental Health Foundation produces a booklet about dementia for children and young people called The Milk's in the Oven which can be downloaded free from their website.
Mark_W	Throwing things open to the floor again, is there anything you'd like to ask Kim?
Mark_W	Kim you've worked on the helpline for two and a half years, are there any common questions you get on this topic?
Kim.W	Hi Mark, yes there are some questions that do come up fairly often. One question that we sometimes get asked is how to cope when plans and hopes for the future change once a person has dementia.
Kim.W	Most people have plans and hopes for their future, for example, relaxing or travelling in retirement.
Kim.W	Having a family member with dementia can change our perception of what is possible and practical considerations can rule out our plans. Understandably this may lead to feelings of depression and resentment.
Kim.W	Coming to terms with the fact that some plans may have to be adapted or put on hold is difficult, and again it is important to have the opportunity to be honest and talk through these feelings with someone.
Mark_W	Thanks Kim
Mark_W	for people who've just joined Kim from our helping is taking questions on Changing Relationships
Mark_W	As we're all out of questions that have come via email, does anyone have any other questions for Kim before wrap up?
Mark_W	Ok looks like that's all for this Q&A, thanks to Kim for her answers
Kim.W	No problem, if you do have any questions or just want to talk things

	through, please get in touch with the helpline on 0300 22 11 22 or you can email us at helpline@alzheimers.org.uk
Mark_W	Thanks everyone for joining us
Mark_W	We'll be posting up a transcript of the session here in the next few weeks - http://forum.alzheimers.org.uk/showthread.php?67116-Chat-room-session-transcripts/page3
Mark_W	Good night all :)