

# Evaluation of Drumming for Dementia online course

## Short summary



## **Background**

Nature Therapy CIC developed the level one Drumming for Dementia online course to support family carers and care staff in health and social care settings to use drumming with people with dementia. The main aim of this type of drumming is thought to be either soothing agitation experienced or increasing the mood or energy of people living with dementia.

Bournemouth University (BU) was commissioned to undertake an independent evaluation. The aim of the study was to assess the online approach used to deliver the Drumming for Dementia course and the resulting implementation and impact on practice in care and home environments. Data collection and analysis was informed by the Kirkpatrick (1959) model for evaluating effectiveness of training (reaction, learning, behaviour, results).

### **The research objectives were to examine:**

**Reaction** – What is working on the course and what might be improved, the training approach used (drumming sense box, online course, Facebook group), and staff and family carer satisfaction with the course.

**Learning** – Staff and family carer knowledge and confidence to deliver drumming in their own workplace or home.

**Behaviour** – Spread of implementation and enablers and barriers to implementing within their own workplace or home.

**Results** – The perceived effect on the care environment or home including: impact on staff/family carers and their care practice following implementation; staff/family carer perceptions of impact on residents/ person with dementia (i.e., changes in agitation and sleep (one to one drumming), energy/mood (group drumming), and staff/family carers perception of wider impact on organisation/own home.

### **What we did**

The evaluation was a mixed methods study collecting quantitative and qualitative data between October 2021 and November 2022 using three methods (i) surveys to course participants (ii) focus groups with course participants (iii) interviews with course developers/convenors.

### **What we found**

Twenty course participants contributed to the questionnaire survey, eight to the focus groups and one course developer to an interview. We found that overall, the level one Drumming for Dementia online course did provide course participants with the confidence what they needed to be able to use this level of drumming with people with dementia. Participants felt that the course was accessible and flexible as it was free, short, visual as well as verbal, and easy to dip in and out of, allowing it to fit around existing commitments. Course participants stated that they would value greater online connection with each other possibly creating a community of practice and more feedback from the developer. Those new to drumming itself would value more videos of different drumbeats.

This evaluation was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, and this affected the opportunity for course participants to enter care homes and other health services. This limited our ability to further understand enablers and barriers to implementing drumming within the workplace and further work is needed in the future. Course participants reported on sessions where drumming was successful in reducing agitation in people living with dementia when used on a one-to-one basis and increased engagement and sense of connection when used in group settings which was remarked upon by care staff as a novel welcomed and valued experience.

## **Conclusions**

From the current literature review it is evident that academic understanding and evidence to support practice development specifically for drumming with people with dementia is in its infancy. This evaluation has shown that it is possible to gain confidence to practice drumming with people with dementia through the level one course provided by Nature Therapy CIC. These have led to positive impacts in terms of reduced agitation and greater engagement for those living with dementia. This evaluation contributes to the small evidence base, and more work is needed in the future.

For a copy of the full report please email [adrc@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:adrc@bournemouth.ac.uk)

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## **Authorship**

This summary was produced in January 2023 by Dr Michelle Heward, Lyndsey Bradley and Dr Caroline Ellis-Hill from Bournemouth University. Design work was completed by Caroline Hemmings.

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