

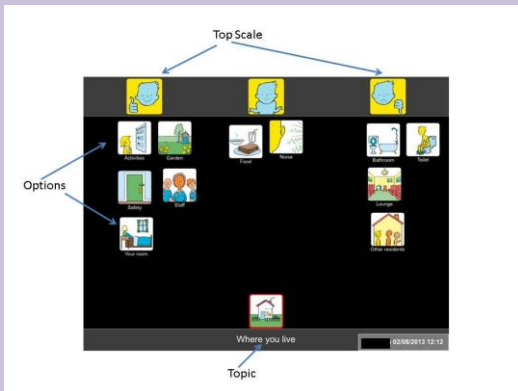
Talking Mats®: a tool to help older people express their views

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Introduction

Talking Mats is a social enterprise whose vision is to improve people's lives by increasing their capacity to communicate effectively about things that matter to them.

Talking Mats is a communication tool which is based on extensive research and was designed by Speech and Language Therapists. It uses three sets of picture communication symbols – topics, options and a visual scale – and a space on which to display these. It has been used successfully with older people and in particular, with people at different stages of dementia



Research background

Research funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation showed that Talking Mats can help both people with dementia and their family carers to be more involved in discussions about managing their daily lives.

Murphy J. Gray C M, Cox S, van Achterberg T, Wyke S (2010) The effectiveness of the Talking Mats Framework with People with Dementia. *Dementia : International Journal of Social research and Practice* 9(4) 454-472

Murphy, J., & Oliver, T.M. (2013) The use of Talking Mats to support people with dementia and their carers to make decisions together. *Health & Social Care in the Community Health and Social Care in the Community* 21(2), 171-180

Putting Research into Practice

We have put research into practice in 2 main ways.

- Running training courses for professionals, carers and family members
- Developing resources and symbols which can be used both in a low tech and digital format.

We have three resources which are helpful for older people, including those with dementia:

1. Health and Well-being which is based on the WHO-ICF (2001) and covers 13 topics
2. Social Care which includes 3 topics aimed particularly at people in residential care
3. Eating and Drinking which includes 3 topics and helps people consider their mealtimes and their nutrition



Key ways Talking Mats can be used

- ✓ Getting to know someone
- ✓ Allowing people to reflect on their lives
- ✓ Eliciting issues to be explored in more detail
- ✓ Involving people in planning their support needs
- ✓ Giving feedback to families, carers and professionals
- ✓ Comparing people's views over time

"Talking Mats helps me identify exactly what activities the patients like to do, instead of everyone always doing the same things."

"It was very stimulating for both of us to be able to spend time together and have a remarkable conversation... She was smiling and laughing and enjoying the activity."