

10.2 Difficulties Eating and Drinking 2



Recap of last session

Last week we agreed that you would try:

Q! Did you get a chance to try this out? How did it go?

The goal this session is working towards:



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QMUL Centre for Psychiatry and Mental Health
Yvonne Carter Building
58 Turner Street
London E1 2AB

Create

Creating strategies for difficulties eating and drinking

Let's look back at the diagram from the last session. We can go through the possible causes of dietary challenges we discussed and think about strategies that have helped or might help.



Create

Creating strategies for difficulties eating and drinking

Now we will focus on creating strategies for difficulties eating and drinking.

Diet

Feeling unwell or uncomfortable

Emotions or feelings

Surroundings or routine

Creating strategies

Create

1. Diet

A breakfast for longer lasting energy?

With protein
(e.g. oats, eggs, nuts)
Fruit

Less sugary foods

Less white bread, rice, pasta

(replace with brown bread, rice, pasta, oat cakes, rice cakes, vegetables, grains or legumes)

Less saturated fats

(replace with low-fat dairy, and unsaturated fats: olives, olive oil, nuts, peanut oil and avocados)

More fish

3 servings a week recommended
Consider fish oil supplements if not consuming fatty fish

Create

Less healthy

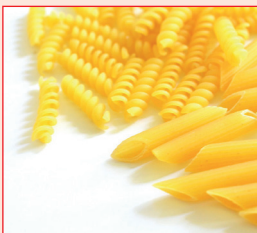
▶ Breakfast



▶ Refined/simple carbohydrates



Biscuits, sugar, cakes, honey



White pasta/ rice/ bread

▶ Saturated and trans-fats



More healthy

▶ Breakfast



▶ Unrefined/complex carbohydrates



Wholemeal pasta

Wholemeal rice



Fresh fruit/
vegetables



Grains and
legumes

▶ Unsaturated fats



Create

Eating more

Unplanned weight loss is a warning sign and something you should always tell their GP. If it is because of eating less due to dementia, these tips might help:

Try different tastes (sometimes stronger flavours due to loss of taste help), colours, smells

Try Milkshakes, smoothies, high protein drinks or soups

Desserts low in sugar (even if they refuse a main, they may still have dessert)

Try warm water with a little fresh lemon or 1 teaspoon of organic cider vinegar before meals to help stimulate appetite. Adding a little honey may be helpful

Staying hydrated

Offer different types of drink -soup, water, fruit juice and tea. All fluids count.

Foods that are high in fluid help, e.g. gravy, jelly and ice cream.

Create

2. Surroundings and routine

▶ Making sure healthy foods and drinks are easily accessible:

Make sure healthy snacks are available between meals if there are worries about weight loss

...and drinks always available, especially at mealtimes and easy to see – use a clear glass

Have a whole glass of water to hand when giving medication

Paid home carers can support meal preparation and prompt eating

Having meals or online shopping delivered

Simple instructions or reminder notes

▶ Helpful set-up:

If people struggle with cutlery, to pick up a glass, or to chew or swallow food, an OT or Speech and Language Therapist can advise.

Make the environment appealing
Familiar sights and sounds of cooking
Soothing music?

Being more active in the day improves appetite

A comfortable, calm, relaxing and well lit room
A noisy environment can be distracting
Table free from clutter

People may struggle to see food – contrasting colours and plain plates help

Regular meal times; set routines (changes of carers can be difficult); not eating too late (within 2 hours of bedtime)

Create

3. Feeling unwell or uncomfortable

▶ If so, some of these tips might help:

Oral hygiene
and regular
mouth checks are
important

Activity, fibre-
rich food, plenty
of fluids and
laxatives can
help constipation

Medication review
with GP

Make them
comfortable and
attend to their
physical needs
(e.g. hunger/thirst/
toilet)

Anything else?

Create

4. Emotions or feelings



Talking Point:

Can you think of some strategies you could try to decrease distress or worry around eating and drinking?

Reassure/ respect

- If the person refuses food or drink, try another time.
- Give them food they like
- Describe the food and drink to them

Choice

- When to eat
- What to eat
- Where to eat
- They may prefer finger foods

Involve

- Give two options to choose from
- They could help prepare the food or lay the table.
- Try eating together, while chatting

Tact

- Try not to worry about mess
- Give plenty of time and small portions if they have a small appetite

Create

What help is available?



Key Point:

Although there are strategies you can use to make eating and drinking easier for your relative, there will be times when help from professionals would be useful.



Talking Point:

Who have you asked for help? Who else might you ask?

It is important to watch out for changes in weight, especially a loss of weight. It can be useful to keep some scales to hand and weigh the person monthly if you are concerned.

Evaluate

Seeing what works

Having identified strategies, it is important to try them out and see if they help. The final **DICE**¹ step is **evaluate**. In this step, we will check if strategies have been tried, see if they're working, and plan how to keep them going long-term.

If they are not working: roll the **DICE** again and find different solutions.



Talking Point:

What are signs to you that a strategy works? What would you be looking out for?

¹ Kales, H. C., Gitlin, L. N., & Lyketsos, C. G. (2014). "Management of Neuropsychiatric Symptoms of Dementia in Clinical Settings: Recommendations from a Multidisciplinary Expert Panel". In *Journal of American Geriatrics Society*, Apr 62(4):762-9.

Summary and next steps

In this section we have talked about:

- Common causes for eating and drinking difficulties
- Creating strategies to address difficulties
- How to evaluate what works

FOR NEXT SESSION: Putting it into practice

Focus on trying the strategies we have discussed and how they went and any other strategies that you try. You may find it helpful to use the optional planning record on the next page.

Next session we will:

Q! Who will attend the next session?

- ▶ **Finally: Let's look over your goals and add in any actions you plan to make.**

Optional planning record:

Describe, investigate, create strategies and evaluate

Describe	Investigate	Create Strategies	Evaluate Did it work?
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Diet?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Surroundings</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Emotions or feelings</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unwell or uncomfortable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Anything else</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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