



Reflective Debrief Resources

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Part 1: Purpose and Method

Purpose

The reflective debrief is intended for people using Stories for the Soul (Godly Play) with participants in care settings who wish to reflect on their sessions to help improve future practice.

The purpose is three-fold:

1. To help the practitioners to become more skilled in the art of Godly Play
2. To find what practices and adaptations best help the participants to benefit from the Stories for the Soul session
3. To share learnings with others e.g. through the Facebook group Stories for the Soul (Godly Play with older adults) or contact us at Storiesforthesoul.org.uk. This is a collaborative project and we never stop learning.

Method

- Carry out the reflective debrief as soon after the session as you can, preferably immediately.
- Involve as many of those who were helping with the session as possible.
- Conduct the debrief away from the participants. Although it may be helpful to carry out the debrief in the same room (in order to aid memory and consider aspects of the environment) if participants are in the room then there is the risk of people feeling 'talked about' as well as sensitive information being shared in their presence. So, you may need to use another space for the debrief.
- Before completing the form, give the storyteller and the other helpers the opportunity to express their feelings. This allows people to emotionally 'offload' if something had been particularly difficult or good. This part of the debrief would not be recorded.

Sheet 1. General Information

Recording this information helps focus on who was present at the session and will help when looking back over your months and years of practice.

Sheet 2: Reflecting on feedback from Care Staff

Give the care setting staff the opportunity to offer their comments, preferably as part of the debrief session. *Sheet 6* 'Feedback from Care Staff' could be given to the care staff for them to complete or to show them what questions they will be asked. If staff cannot be present for the debrief then they could offer their written comments or could feedback by phone or email. Whilst completing this sheet, consider if there are changes you would like to make for next time and add these to *Sheet 5* as you go along.

Sheet 3: Reflecting on Feedback from Participants.

Feedback from the elders about how they felt about the session is obviously very important. The elders may give feedback informally, directly and indirectly and at different times during the session. Asking for feedback during the session may intrude on the 'spiritual work' that is going on. However, asking questions like whether someone can hear the story or what response materials they may find helpful can be done at appropriate times, eg when chatting with someone during the feast. The elders could also be asked at certain points in the

programme, perhaps by someone outside the group, to give feedback about the sessions. *Sheet 7* 'Feedback from Participants' can be used with participants (it may be more appropriate to use more non verbal methods for elders with cognitive difficulties). Relatives and friends may have participated and so could also be asked for feedback using the same sheet. Whilst completing this sheet, consider if there are changes you would like to make for next time and add these to *Sheet 5* as you go along.

The 'indirect feedback' through the reactions and responses of the participants to the session is probably the most important to consider - this is done whilst reflecting on each element of the session in *Sheet 4*.

Sheet 4: Reflecting on the different elements of the session

For each element include reflection on the following:

What was good?

What was difficult?

What did you notice in the reactions/responses of the participants (verbal and non-verbal)?

How did the session contribute to the spiritual well-being (and other aspects of well-being) of the elders and others who were present?

Whilst completing this sheet, consider if there are changes you would like to make for next time and add these to *Sheet 5* as you go along. If time is limited you may decide to choose which parts of the session you would like to focus on, e.g. you might focus on how the space was set up or how the story was told.

Sheet 5: Changes for next session and action

This sheet should be completed during the reflection on *Sheets 2, 3* and *4*.

Focussing on what changes are to be made is key as the purpose of the reflective debrief is to improve our practice. This may be in relation to a particular story or a general change to all sessions.

Sheet 6: Feedback from Care Staff

This sheet relates to *Sheet 2*, to be given to the care staff; its use is further described above.

Sheet 7: Feedback from Participants

This sheet relates to *Sheet 3*, to be given to the participants—primarily who will be elders but it could also be used by the friends and relatives of elders; its use is further described above.

What to do with the forms

Keeping the recording forms may be very valuable as you look back over months and years of practice. Building in times for the team to look back over the records to do some further analysis with the benefit of a longer-term view is important.

Sharing your learnings

We can collaborate and share our learnings via the Facebook group *Stories for the Soul* (Godly Play with older adults) or contact us at Storiesforthesoul.org.uk.

Part 2. The spiritual well-being of elders

Godly Play is an approach to spiritual accompaniment so an important focus of the evaluation will be on how the session affects the spiritual well-being of the elders.

What do we mean by spirituality? Spirituality can include religious faith and practices, but can also be experienced and understood in non-religious ways. It is difficult to confine spirituality in words but a helpful definition may be:

Spirituality is the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or transcendent.

The spiritual journey of people of any age can be viewed through the lenses of "meaning and purpose" and "connectedness" and there are principles of Godly Play that contribute to spiritual well-being in all stages of life:

- Valuing the individual - respecting and accepting people for who they are;
- Giving autonomy to the individual;
- Recognising the divine spark in each person;
- Building and supporting community;
- Allowing expression not only with words but through gestures, symbols, objects;
- Supporting silence;
- Allowing people to connect with the story and to make meaning out of the story;
- Allowing play and imagination;
- Creating a safe place in which to wonder and find meaning;
- Providing an environment of beauty;
- Providing opportunity for people to connect with nature;
- Giving space for people to connect with God

and more ...

There will be adaptations to Godly Play that we can make in response to the particular aspects of the spirituality of older people. For example in the wondering questions that we use, in the stories that we choose, in the response materials that we provide, in the way we support prayer. New stories may need to be developed, e.g. the parable of the forgiving father/elder brother/prodigal son was not included as one of the 6 guiding parables for children but may be an important parable for older people.

You might find it helpful to consider the following if you are working with people living with dementia:

The spiritual needs of a person living with dementia - Bell and Troxel

- To be connected
- To be known and accepted
- To be respected and appreciated
- To love and be loved

To be productive and successful
 To still become and to have hope

Bell and Troxel. Spirituality and the person with dementia – a view from the field. (2001) Alzheimer's Care Quarterly 2(2): 31–45.

Person centred care - Kitwood

Kitwood's (1997) theory sought to identify behaviours that would undermine a person's wellbeing – malignant social psychology – and behaviours that would enhance a person's well being – positive person work – to enable healthcare professionals to deliver optimum levels of person-centred care that would retain and enhance personhood for people with dementia.

The needs of people with dementia should also be considered and include:

- Comfort – the feeling of trust that comes from others.
- Attachment – security and finding familiarity in unusual places.
- Inclusion – being involved in the lives of others.
- Occupation – being involved in the processes of normal life.
- Identity – what distinguishes a person from others and makes them unique.

Kitwood theorised that these psychological needs are present in all human beings, but are likely to be heightened for people with dementia because they are usually more vulnerable and less likely to be able to take action to satisfy these needs. Essentially, these five psychological needs contribute to the expression of love.

Kitwood, T. (1997). Dementia Reconsidered: the person comes first. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Spiritual care of people living with dementia - Swinton

Swinton (2015) suggests that spiritual care is a practical concept that finds meaning wherever it is placed. He reminds us that everything we do in Stories for the Soul can be spiritual care, because everything that we do in love can bring

purpose,
 value,
 hope,
 meaning.

Swinton, J. (2015). John Swinton: Delivering quality spiritual care. Available at:

<https://youtu.be/SDDeVWGjDxs>.

Part 3: Reflective Debrief Sheets

Sheet 1. General Information

A. General details

Place	
Type of setting (Residential home, nursing home, lunch club, church group)	
Date	
Session number	
Description of the group <i>e.g. is it an open group or invitation only, is it a religious group? are all the elders living with dementia (early onset or advanced?) is it a single gender group?</i>	
Elders present and Individual Needs <i>Write down the initials of participants, with their gender, physical and cognitive needs e.g. AN (f) severe deafness, e.o. dementia</i>	
Storyteller	
Door person	
Group helpers	
Care staff	
Any absences and reasons (elders and leaders) <i>(It may be important to note absences if people have had a special invitation to the group)</i>	
Story shared	
Other activities in the session <i>E.g. communion was shared after the session</i>	

Sheet 2: Reflecting on feedback from Care Staff

Give the care setting staff the opportunity to offer their comments, preferably as part of the debrief session. The sheet 'Feedback from Care Staff' could be given to the care staff for them to complete or to be aware of what questions they will be asked. If staff cannot be present for the debrief then they could offer their written comments or could feedback by phone or email. It may be appropriate to reflect on the feedback from care staff. Whilst completing this sheet, consider if there are changes you would like to make for next time and add these to Part 5 as you go along.

Feedback on: What was good about the session?

Feedback on: What was not quite so good about the session?

Feedback on: What was noticed about the reactions and responses of the elders

Feedback on suggestions to improve the session and other comments

Sheet 3: Reflecting on feedback from Participants

The elders may give feedback informally, directly and indirectly and at different times during the session. Asking for feedback during the session may intrude on the 'spiritual work' that is going on. However asking questions like whether someone can hear the story or what response materials they may find helpful can be done at appropriate times, eg when chatting one to one during the feast. The elders could also be asked at certain points in the programme, perhaps by someone outside the group, to give feedback about the sessions. There is a Feedback sheet that can be used with participants, including one designed specifically for elders with cognitive difficulties. Relatives and friends who are present at the session could also be asked for feedback using the same sheet.

Whilst completing this sheet, consider if there are changes you would like to make for next time and add these to *Sheet 5* as you go along.

Feedback on: What did you like about the session?

Feedback on: Is there anything you do not find helpful about the session?

Feedback on: Do you have any suggestions for improvement of the session?

Feedback on: Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Sheet 4: Reflecting on the different elements of the session

For each element include reflection on the following - What was good? What was difficult? What did you notice in the reactions/responses of the elders (both verbally and non-verbally)? How did the session contribute to the spiritual well-being (and other aspects of well-being) of the elders? Whilst completing this part, consider if there are changes you would like to make for next time and add these to *Sheet 5* as you go along. If time is limited, you may decide to choose which parts of the evaluation you would like to focus on.

Space

e.g. accessibility of the room, size of the room, noise, changes to how the room was set up with chairs, tables, focal shelf

Entering and Threshold

e.g. how the elders were welcomed, how interruptions to the session were dealt with

Building the circle

e.g. how the storyteller built the circle and helped people to get ready

Sharing the story

e.g. adaptations to the story, the size and quality of the story materials, use of voice by the storyteller, body language

Wondering

e.g. how was the wondering facilitated, adaptations to the wondering questions, time spent on the wondering

Response

e.g. what response materials were available, how were the elders invited to use them, was any help given to the elders in using the materials, what time was spent on Response, what happened to any creative work at the end

Feast

e.g. what was the feast, how was it shared, were the elders involved in serving the feast, how was prayer or worship supported

Blessing and Leaving

e.g. how was a final blessing given to people, how did they leave?

Sheet 5: Changes for next session and action

This sheet should be completed during the reflection in *Sheets 2, 3 and 4*.

Focussing on what changes are to be made is key as the purpose of the reflective debrief is to improve our practice. This may be in relation to a particular story or a general change to sessions.

One of the actions to be taken might be to communicate your learnings with the rest of your local team or to share something more widely, e.g. via the Stories for the Soul project.

Suggestions for changing any practices for next session (and reasons)
Action (eg resources, communications)

Part 4: Feedback Sheets

Sheet 6: Feedback from Care Staff

We really value your feedback on the session, especially as you personally know the older people and can notice things that we may not be aware of. After each session we reflect on the session in order to make improvements for the next time. Our aim is that the sessions will benefit the well-being of all those present (including the older people, any friends of relatives, the helpers and the care staff). It would be ideal if you could join us for all or part of the debrief immediately after the session. However we realise that there are many calls on your time so this may not be possible. You may prefer to complete this sheet and/or to give us feedback through an email, a telephone conversation or a meeting at another time.

Thank you very much for your time.

What was good about the session?

What was not quite so good about the session?

What did you notice about the reactions and responses of the elders?

Suggestions to improve the session and other comments

Sheet 7: Feedback from Participants

We really value your feedback.

Thank you very much for your time.

What did you like about the session?

Is there anything you do not find helpful about the session?

Do you have any suggestions for improvement of the session?

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?