

# Practical self-help guide for people with dementia

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A free self-help guide is now available to support people diagnosed with dementia to achieve their goals to enjoy daily activities and independent living.

The new resource, called "[My Life, My Goals](#)," is funded and supported by Alzheimer's Society, and based on a major research program led by the University of Exeter.

Professor Linda Clare, of the University of Exeter, who led the research, said: "People with [dementia](#) often feel happier when supported with [daily activities](#) and things that bring joy to their life. It's not always necessary to stop doing these things after a [dementia diagnosis](#); they may just need to find different ways of doing them.

"My Life, My Goals" is a self-help guide designed to help people living with dementia, step by step, try to achieve their goals."

The guide stems from an Alzheimer's Society funded implementation project called GREAT into Practice (GREAT-iP). The funding supported the researchers from the GREAT trial, led by the University of Exeter, to adapt their cognitive rehabilitation therapy to real-life practice.

Cognitive rehabilitation is a type of therapy that can make managing everyday activities easier for people with early-stage dementia.

It is often delivered over several sessions between a therapist and a person living with dementia. The therapist will help the person living with dementia to plan how to meet their goals and will support them to do so. Several studies have shown that it can help to maintain independence.

The trial demonstrated that people with dementia were better able to achieve their goals in every-day tasks if they had received [goal](#)-orientated cognitive rehabilitation therapy.

A team of people with dementia, supported by Innovations in Dementia,

worked with the researchers to create the self-help guide, My Life, My Goals, to enable other people living with dementia to set and achieve goals, even without a therapist.

Allison, from Northern Ireland, is 61 and was diagnosed with dementia in 2017. Allison has been part of the project team creating My Life, My Goals.

She said: "Dementia takes so much away from you. I came away from being given my diagnosis thinking my life was over. You are handed a lot of leaflets and information, but it is very medically based. It's very daunting stuff. If I had been given My Life, My Goals I would have been given hope.

Allison realized she had to adapt her approach to cooking if she was to continue her passion.

She said: "I loved cooking, I loved baking. The only way I can do that now is to be exceptionally organized and to work from a recipe. I can no longer remember things that I have made all my life, but that's fine, it means I can still do it. Whenever I'm cooking something I quite often forget to put water in the pot. So that is an important part of every step I'm doing—if there's water it has to be on that list!

"My Life, My Goals is personal to you. You don't have to read it cover to cover. You can dip in and go to the sections that you need.

"Goals that are important to me might not be the goals you would choose. Nobody else is saying what I have to achieve or what goals I have to set.

"This booklet might help you realize you have already put some of these steps into place. People who haven't put them into place yet can be

guided on how to start the process.

"Maybe start with something really simple, something you know you can achieve easily and see how these steps help you do it better. It will be a good guidance and a good prompt for people to actually start."

Provided by University of Exeter

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