

Telling Lies to People with Dementia: Is it ethical?

Dr Jane Murray



Do you lie at work?

① The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from



Do you lie at home?

① The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from



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YES!



Personhood

“It is a standing or status that is bestowed on one human being, by others, in the context of relationship and social being”

Reference: Kitwood, 1997.

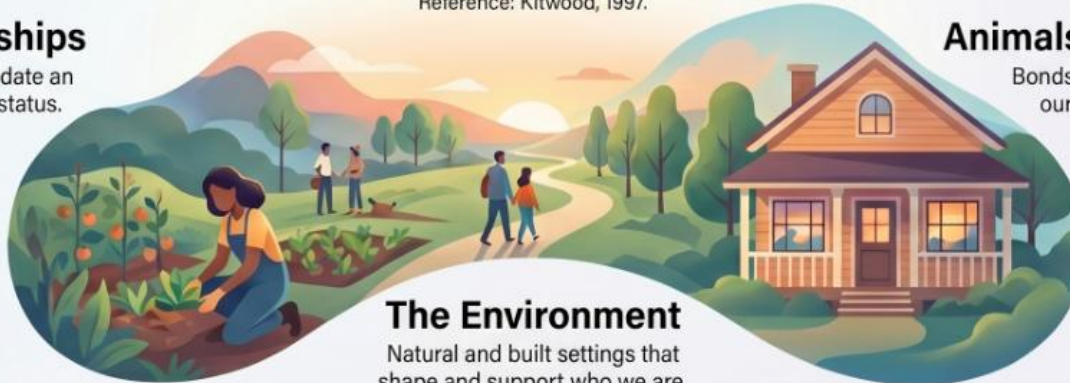
Human Relationships

Social connections that validate an individual's presence and status.



Animals and Companions

Bonds with animals that enrich our sense of social being.



The Environment

Natural and built settings that shape and support who we are.

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Personhood underpins relationship-centred care

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What is a lie?



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Whose truth?



The Taxonomy



Blatant

Patient: “Mam. Mam. Where’s me mam?”

Healthcare assistant: “She’s at home. She’s fine.”

Patient: “Are you sure?”

”

Healthcare assistant: “Yes she’s at home”

Patient: “Oh”.

Patient; “Er. Er” {Waving hand to stop a healthcare who was walking past}

Healthcare assistant; “[patient’s name] I’ll be two minutes [PN]. I will be back in two minutes”

Familiarity

- Colloquial; Pet, Hinny, Darling, Honey, Love
- Status: Boss, Aunty

A male patient kept walking into a ward visitor, making physical contact.

Healthcare assistant: “C’mon [patient’s name], help me do this paperwork {showing patient the observation file} then jobs a good un.”

Patient follows

Healthcare assistant: “You sit there and help me fill these forms in”

Banter

- Colloquial
- Rythmic
- Jokes

Going along with

A patient had started to shout very loudly and angrily whilst eating their tea. Staff could not make out verbal content.

Healthcare assistant apologises: “Everything is fine now”

Patient returns to eating their tea.



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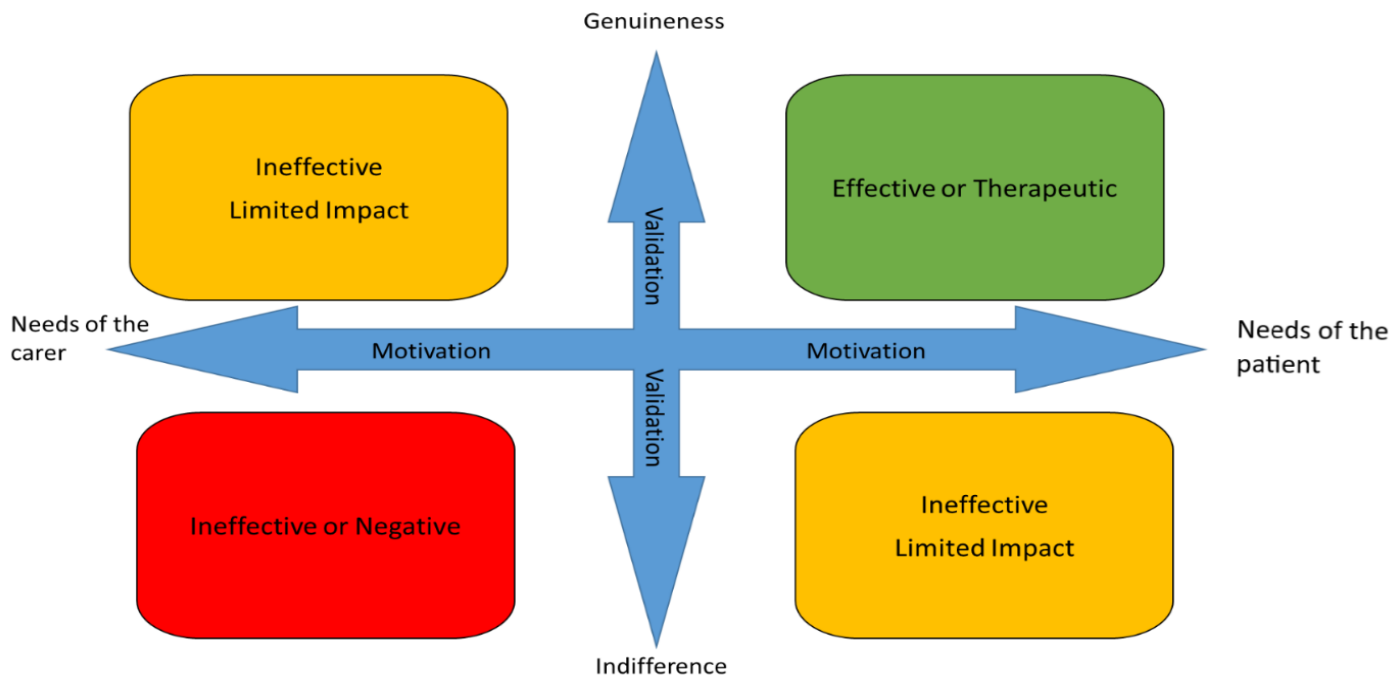


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Reflection is key



The Lie Arm (Affective Reflective Model)



Groupwork

- Going round the table, each person share an instance where they have purposefully told a lie.
- Discuss where each lie sits in the taxonomy, and then plot it on the Lie ARM.
- Does everyone agree?
- Are there different views about each communication?
- Feedback to the wider group

Key messages when telling lies

- Be genuine
- Validate the recipient's emotions
- Do it for the right reasons

Opinion

- Lie telling is an effective intervention
- Lie telling can support personhood
- My truth is no more important than the truth of the person with dementia

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Thank you

Any questions?

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