

Forget Me Not Box to comfort those affected by dementia

A sensory box that aims to comfort those affected by dementia by helping them to recall memories has been created by an Edinburgh Napier student.

Forget Me Not Box has been created by final year graphic design student, Christy Orr.

The box contains a set of tools that help trigger the five senses – sight, smell, touch, taste and sound – helping those with dementia recall memories and retain identity. It gives the user the opportunity to completely personalise its items and is split into four main sections.

The lid can be used to showcase photographs. The inclusion of scent bottles provide opportunities for the user to include certain smells such as their favourite perfume. A built-in sound module can provide favourite music or even voice notes from loved ones with another compartment available to store treasured items such as marbles, medals and more.

The box also includes taste cards that can be used as a reminiscence tool. They feature photos and descriptions of food and drink that may trigger memories.

The aim of the box is to allow those affected by dementia to undertake reminiscence therapy sessions with a loved one or carer, with the playful items acting as conversation starters.

Christy, 22, has designed the box as part of her final year

graphic design project at Edinburgh Napier, and will this week exhibit her work at the annual Edinburgh Napier Degree Show which takes place online from 2 June.

The toolkit has already been user-tested by individuals at various stages of their dementia diagnosis through a link-up with Yorkshire-based charity Dementia Forward. Christy has also received support from CogniHealth with the project.

Christy, who is from Cumbernauld originally, has created the toolkit in memory of her late-Gran after seeing first-hand her own experiences with Alzheimer's.

She said: "I was quite young when I lost my Gran to Alzheimer's but I remember finding it quite difficult to find things to initially talk to her about when I visited her. That's really where the idea for Forget Me Not Box stemmed from. I wanted to create something that helped start those conversations.

"As I looked more into this area, and learnt more about reminiscence therapy and how it can help, it was important that my box had the ability to be completely personalised to an individual person. Everyone has different triggers that invoke memories – whether it be a certain smell, a sound, a photograph, the thought of eating fish and chips or the sight of something like a souvenir from a past holiday. It was essential that the toolkit could help include as many of these things as possible.

"Working with CogniHealth and Dementia Forward has been fantastic, and it's great to have seen the box out there and being used by people who it was designed for. I'm still awaiting feedback from the user-testing but early indications show that it has been warmly received by those who have used it.

"Although this has been designed as part of my final year project at Edinburgh Napier, I'm very keen to continue with

the idea as my time at the University comes to an end. I'm really looking forward to developing the box further in the coming months and if it can help some more people find comfort through a dementia diagnosis, then it'll have been completely worthwhile."

The Edinburgh Napier Degree Show runs from 2 June. More information and to view this year's work, [visit here.](#)

