1. Empowering Persons with Dementia to Become More Active Participants in Decision Making Related to Their Present and Future Care

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2. Dementia Elevator Innovation Award 2016

- **2016:** Aideen Lawlor and I won the Dementia Elevator award with the project: *Empowering Persons with Dementia to Become more active participants in decision making related to their present and future care*

- Preceded by Changing Minds project 2015 funded by Irish Hospice Foundation.

- **2016-2018:** Project’s aims
  - Inclusion, decision making and the ADMA 2015
  - The formation of a mutually supportive group committed to exploring TM and compiling a report
3. Dementia Elevator Award 2016

- **2017**: Prize money funded my training as a Talking Mats Trainer (accredited) in Scotland.

- **2018**: I trained Six speech and language therapists across Ireland in using Talking Mats. They trialled the system in their own work settings and documented findings and reflections.

- **Dec 2018**: Phase 1 report and recommendations were compiled from the trainees. **16 case studies and reflections** form the core body of report.
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4. Talking Mats™ What is it?...

- Talking (TM) Mats is an evidence-based interactive communication symbols tool and is based on extensive research.
- It aims to help people with congenital and acquired communication difficulties communicate more effectively, particularly in decision making or getting views on various topics.
- When using it with people with dementia, it is most often used with those presenting with mild to moderate impairment.
- It is can be used by clinical practitioners, carers and support workers.
- See www.talkingmats.com for further information and research.
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5. ...Talking Mats™ What is it?

• It uses **3 sets of picture communication symbols**; topics, options and a visual scale, and a space on which to display them.
  - **Topics**: What you want to talk about eg: Health
  - **Options**: Relate to the topic eg: Heart
  - **Top scale**: Allows the thinker indicate his general feelings about each option. Eg: Happy/Unhappy or somewhere in between?

• Once the **topic is chosen**, the thinker is given the options one at a time and asked what they feel about each one. He can then **place the symbol** under the appropriate visual scale.
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6. TM Features and Core Principles 1...

Check and change:

– When the mat is complete, the listener checks each item to ensure that it reflects the thinkers views.

– Summary/ Review and recommendations.

– Actions are agreed
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7. Completed Talking Mat ™

Talking Mats: Topic - Health
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8. Some TM Features and Core Principles ...

Thinker: This is the person whose views are being sought:
- The thinker should be in control as much as possible
- The thinker sets the pace. The mat is in front him/her
- The thinker and the listener sit side by side

Listener: This is the person seeking the views

Good listener skills
- The listener should be non-leading and non-judgemental
- The listener – listens!! Allow quiet and talk less.
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9 ...Some TM Features and Core Principles.

...Good Listener Skills:

– Use **open questions** to encourage expression and hand over each option: “How do you feel about...?”

– **Allow time for response** and consider non-verbal communication.
  
  Ask the person where he/she wants to put the picture.

– **Choose topic/options carefully.**

– Identify **purpose** of the discussion **clearly**

– **Stick to the topic!** Additional options (blanks) can be added if needed. Sub-mats can also be created.
The system is

- **structured and person centred**.
- It **facilitates capacity** to get the persons views on chosen topics.
- It **fosters inclusion**.

**Note:** A tool is only as effective as the person using it - training is **required**.

- **Foundation training** (Level 1 to use TM) includes **video recording** facilitated conversations, **with consent**, for analysis at Day 2.
Key Question

11. Can TM be used with this person for a particular purpose?...

Very briefly, the **Circles model** comes from a developmental framework but is *relevant across the lifespan* and useful when considering whether to use TM with an individual.

- Humans develop from the *internal sensory world* where our contact with the world is through our senses of touch, sound, smell and vision.

- From here, we move into the external world, interacting with things around us, *moving from unintentional to intentional communication.*
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**Key Question**

12. ...Can TM be used with this person for a particular purpose?

- We gradually develop an understanding of the *here and now* – the lived experience.
- As development continues, we begin to develop an understanding of the complexity of the *wider world*.
- We become able to deal with things *out of context*, cope with *abstract ideas*, think about *issues*, *pros and cons* and *make judgements*.

**Consider in advance:** Where on this continuum is the person I am working with?
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13. NICE Guidelines-Capacity Oct 2018

P. 162: Murphy J, Oliver T (2013): *The use of talking mats to support people with dementia and their carers to make decisions together.*

*Health and Social Care in the Community.*

P 176: Findings:

– *When participants were asked to rate their level of involvement for each discussion type... the mean score was significantly higher for discussions using talking mats than for discussions using usual methods of communication... This was also the case when participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction for each discussion type....*
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14 Phase 1 Project: Outcomes

**Trialled the system**
SLTs trialled and video recorded 16 facilitated discussions using TM.

**Report and recommendations**

**Settings**
Acute; Out-Patient Clinics, ID service, Residential cCare, Community Care.

**What we did**

**Explored**
Choices and decisions; getting to know someone, responsive behaviour; MDT communication +
Summary of findings...

All SLTs found that TM empowered people with dementia to make decisions about their care.

- It was helpful in introducing topics.
- The pictures aided comprehension, supporting previous findings.
- It helped the person with dementia maintain attention to the topic.
- By photographing the completed mat, it provided a concrete visual reference that could be referred to at a later time.
16. ...Summary of findings...

- It was considered “powerful in supporting capacity assessments”, and all decision making regarding present and future care needs.

- They reported that they liked that TM facilitated people’s strengths rather than focusing on deficits.

- It was helpful in **addressing the underlying needs** for people with **responsive behaviour** - Seen as a significant **catalyst for change**.
17 ...Summary of findings 2...

- TM was considered to make the interaction more comfortable for both thinker and listener.
- All found that the influence of a suitable environment was an important consideration for sessions.
- TM was helpful in monitoring non-verbal communication, particularly when video recorded.
- TM encourages mindful reflective practice for the SLTs- CORU for SLT and HSCP.
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Summary of findings

- One SLT reported that it was initially a challenge to hand over control to the thinker. This supports the view of the need/benefits of training when using the tool.

- We need to challenge our assumptions.

- For example Persons with severe dementia may sometimes be able to participate in decisions related to care with enough support, if more concrete symbols are used. Plan the TM well and video record.
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19 Case Study 1 – Barry

• Setting: Residential Care

• Topic: Leisure

• Barry 77 year old man in residential care.

• His receptive language functional for this TM.

• CVA 2 years ago - severe dysarthria and apraxia of speech. Attempts verbal communication but is very unintelligible. He uses a communication book to express basic needs. He is unable to write.

• He has mild/ moderate dysphagia (Swallowing difficulty) and mild cognitive impairment..
A new resident - was finding it very difficult to settle into his new environment. Exhibiting some responsive behaviours with staff and other residents, particularly around mealtimes.

SLT explored likes and dislikes around food and drink. She created her own symbols using familiar pictures. As Talking Mats progressed she also created sub-mats as more information emerged......

TM was a great way of focusing him to the topic...and to obtain his opinion on his likes and dislikes around food and drink.
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21 ...Case Study 1 – Barry...

- The TM revealed that he did not like gravy on his dinner but he got it every day! He was also given porridge every morning which he did not like.
- He was given these because he was on a texture modified diet for his dysphagia.
- There was one incident where he had thrown his plate on the ground at dinner-time. As a result of TM, suitable alternatives were found.
- This improved his enjoyment of meals and decreased the responsive behaviour significantly.
What Patricia SLT reported:

“My experience of Talking Mats with this client was very positive as I felt that through the mat we instantly improved his quality of life and also improved the situation for other staff members and patients on the unit. The (Talking) Mat was what stimulated the targeted conversation and was the catalyst to improving the client’s environment in line with his wishes and preferences....”
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23 ...Case Study 2 – Claire...

- **Topic**: Leisure and Hobbies  
  **Setting**: Outpatient clinic

- 46 year lady with *early onset Alzheimer’s dementia*, living at home with her husband. She presented with Moderate dementia and mild-moderate language difficulties.

- She **struggled with word finding** during conversation and tended to be a more **passive communicator**

- She allowed her husband to communicate for her.
24  ...Case Study 2 – Claire...

• The SLT chose TM to empower Clare to make choices for herself, and help to overcome word-finding difficulties in conversation.

• She chose the leisure topics as a way of getting to know Clare and find out more about her and how she spent her time.

• Claire actively engaged with the TM, reported that she really enjoyed using it.

• She was able to have a good conversation about leisure options that she did or did not enjoy.
What Sarah SLT reported:

“The Talking Mat worked really well with Clare... She reported that she enjoyed using the Mats and took full ownership of the conversation. The Talking Mats revealed Clare’s communication strengths and she was more confident in communicating as the picture supports bypassed her word finding difficulties and allowed her to make choices. By using the TM I had the best conversation that I have had with Claire. It allowed me to get to know her better, and her preferences. It was also useful for her husband to see how the TM enabled better conversation......
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26. Phase 2 Project- 2019/2020

**Key objectives**

1. Seek funding from National HSCP office to expand accredited train-the-trainer program so more SLTs are trained in TM

2. Cascade TM training for SLTs on a priority basis

3. Increase evidence base and knowledge

4. Vision: TM as a tool to become embedded into practice over time, particularly - ADMA