

IARC, December 2016, A7 Round table discussion

Towards an asset-based approach to living with aphasia: exploring the relevance and implications for people with aphasia and families



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Round table overview

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- Background to asset-based approaches
- COST CATs WG5 background and overview of the six projects
 - Reflections and key findings
- Round table discussion
- Summary and take-home messages

Asset-based / -focused approaches: an overview

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- Individual and community strengths and capabilities as a foundation for improving health and wellbeing
 - Identify and build assets within a community
- ‘Salutogenesis’: ‘salus’ = health; ‘genesis’ = origin
 - Orientation towards creating health rather than preventing illness
 - “What makes you healthy?”; “What makes you feel good / well?”
- Individual’s capacity to comprehend, find meaning and manage their situation
- Internal and external resources available

Theory of asset-based change (Hopkins & Ripon 2015): key components

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- Reframing thinking, goals and outcomes
 - Starting point for further exploration and change
- Recognising the assets available to achieve the change
- Mobilising assets for a purpose
- Co-producing outcomes - on the pathway to the long-term goal

How we developed our approach: COST CATs WG5

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- COST CATs meeting London, March 2015
 - Introducing an asset-focus
- COST CATs meeting Cyprus, September 2015
 - Readings; WG5 approach discussed and agreed
 - Work plan set out for members to action
- COST CATs meeting Finland, February 2016
 - Reporting on four pilot studies exploring the potential of asset based approaches for people living with aphasia and family members in different contexts
 - Cultural; organisational; stages of aphasia
- Two further studies initiated
 - Trinity College, Dublin
 - University of Southern Denmark, Odense

Six studies

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- **Premise for our projects**
 - “What makes you feel good / well / healthy?” (glass half full)
- **Methods**
 - Individual interviews (PWA & family members)
 - Facilitated group discussions
 - Participatory methods and appreciative inquiry
 - Reflective conversations
- **Imagination and creative use of resources**

Reflections on taking an asset-focused approach

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- Re-framing thinking towards assets can be hard and may need time, but many people connected easily to and embraced this approach
- A powerful tool for empowering people with aphasia & carers
- This approach helped to shift conversations & interactions more specifically towards assets & possibilities
- Being flexible, getting the terminology & resources right is key

What people highlighted in our studies

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- Being proactive: doing things for myself and by myself
- Personal strengths and inner assets
 - People with aphasia: positive outlook; humour; “I’m not shy”; self-belief; courage; determination
 - Family members: lifestyle changes; flexibility
- Making connections
 - To your previous life and self
 - To others through family or other people with aphasia
 - To places, activities and things
 - ...and making the most of opportunities
- There may be mountains to climb every day, but connections help to
 - Restore meaning and confidence
 - Establish friendships and relationships that make more things possible

Questions for discussion

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1. What is the relevance and potential of an asset-focused approach for people with aphasia and their families as a means for promoting living well and successfully with aphasia?
2. How could an asset-focused approach complement other (e.g. clinical / therapy) approaches?
3. How could this approach be developed and implemented in a collaborative partnership?
4. Timing - when is the optimum time to introduce this approach?

IARC asset-focused approaches round table: some considerations

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- Highlighting relevance of asset-focused approaches
 - How to start the conversation and stimulate discussions with people with aphasia, family members and clinical colleagues?
 - What resources could be used to support asset-focused initiatives?
- Do asset-focused approaches replace or complement existing practices?
 - How could asset-focused sensibilities enhance existing approaches?
- What changes might be needed (individuals, systems, resources) to implement asset-focused approaches where you are?
- Who are potential partners? e.g. health or community organisations
- Is there an optimum time to introduce this approach?
 - Possibly deploy different aspects at different times e.g. helping PWA ‘make connections’ early on; supporting community organisations to develop new resources

References

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