Evaluation of Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Memory Lane Cafés


Funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services

Presented by Ms Betty Haralambous
The Evaluation Team

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Background

What are Memory Lane Cafés?

- A service for people with dementia and their family carers or friends
- Originally conceived in The Netherlands in 1997
- Introduced in Victoria in 2002
- Conducted by Alzheimer’s Australia Vic in three locations and funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services
Background

The aims of Memory Lane Cafés are to:

• Promote social inclusion and prevent isolation
• Facilitate communication and sharing of experiences between families and carers, fostering peer support
• Improve understanding of dementia and related issues
• Provide a forum for informal advice and consultation with counselling and support staff
• Promote and facilitate access to the broader service system within the community
Background

Accessing a Memory Lane Café:

• Eligible to attend after completion of Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Living With Memory Loss (LWML) Program
• LWML allows people to acknowledge and discuss dementia in a supported environment through provision of education and information
• Following completion of LWML, provided with details of Café
Background
Aims

The aim of this evaluation was to:

• provide information about Memory Lane Cafés including the service model, client demographics, impact and outcomes, entry, referral and exit patterns, service gaps and possible future directions
Methodology

1. A literature review
2. Alzheimer’s Australia Vic staff consultations
3. Service provider interviews
4. Client focus groups
5. Client surveys
6. Researchers’ observations
Methodology

Literature review:

• Key words: caregivers, social support, health promotion, mental health, consumer satisfaction, and program evaluation

• Studies since 1999 of social interventions for people with dementia

• Three themes: impacts for carers, social and educational interventions; the Alzheimer Café model
Methodology

Researchers’ observations:
• Three researchers attended a Café in each location
• Researchers spoke briefly about the evaluation
• Researchers sat and talked with clients during the Cafés
Methodology

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic staff and service provider consultations:

- Alzheimer’s Australia Vic staff - aims, benefits, and areas for improvement for the Cafés
- Semi-structured interviews with service providers - knowledge and experience of the Cafés, benefits and suggestions
Methodology

Client consultations:

• Three focus groups were held with clients. All clients on mailing list (N=402) were sent a letter of invitation

• Client survey collected demographic data, clients experiences and information from those who were not regular attendees
Methodology

Analysis

• Qualitative data was subject to content and thematic analysis

• Quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
Findings
Findings – client profile

• 402 surveys distributed to clients; 139 returned (34.6% response rate)
• 50.4% were female as were majority of family/friends invited to attend Memory Lane Cafés (61.2%)
• Average age of people with dementia 78; family member, carer, friend 71 years of age
• 8% of respondents who attended a Memory Lane Café were under age 65
Findings – client profile

• **Country of birth**
  – 14% of survey respondents were born in a country outside Australia (where English was not the main language)
  – 5% indicated English was not their main language
Findings – client profile

The following table presents Country of birth of survey respondents with dementia by percentage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Café 1</th>
<th>Café 2</th>
<th>Café 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born in Australia</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in countries where English is not the main language</td>
<td>20% (71% of 70+ in LGA born in a non-English speaking country)</td>
<td>13.2% (19.8% of 70+ in LGA born in a non-English speaking country)</td>
<td>12.6% (36.5% of 70+ in LGA born in a non-English speaking country)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer a language other than English</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey findings – client profile

• Why participants stopped attending:
  – Other commitments (25%)
  – Person with dementia being too unwell (25%)
  – Lack of interest (25%)
  – Travel distance (10%)
  – Death of the person with dementia (10%).
• Similar reasons for never attending
• A small proportion had never attended as not interested
Survey findings – client profile

- Café attendance
  - The majority had attended at least one Café (82%)
  - Most attended Café 3 (42.1%), followed by Café 2 (33.3%), and Café 1 (21.9%)
  - Of those who had attended at least one Café, almost half attended as often as they could
Findings – service model

Key characteristics of Cafés:
• Cafés located in parks/rural surroundings
• Counsellors and volunteers attend each session to provide support
• Entertainment provided at each session
• Afternoon tea provided at each Café session
Findings – service model

Client feedback of Café model:

“The socialising. It’s nice to get out and have a cuppa and catch up with… the same people”

“Feeling good because you’re with people who are in the same type of situation as you are…”

“…everybody with dementia sees that there are other people like them so they don’t feel like outsiders”
Findings – service model
Findings – service model
Findings – potential improvements

Improvements suggested include:

• Review single access point via LWML

• Counsellors to inform clients of their role
  – some did not know staff were counsellors and could assist them if required

• Clients requested Cafés be accessible via public transport
  – Survey respondents cited location as a reason for not attending / ceasing attendance
Findings – potential improvements

Improvements suggested include:

• Regular review of entertainment – to allow for opportunity for discussion amongst the groups

• Additional options for afternoon tea

• Need for more Cafés
  – Some clients travelling extensive distances to attend
Findings – potential improvements

Improvements suggested include:
• Increase service provider knowledge and awareness of Memory Lane Cafés

• Clarify eligibility
  – clients were uncertain whether they could continue attending if their circumstances changed
Findings – service model
Recommendations

The evaluation recommended:

- Maintain existing service provision
- Trial additional referral pathways
- Clarify/reinforce the role of Alzheimer’s Australia Vic staff
- Consider venue accessibility
The evaluation recommended:

• Provide catering options

• Expand Memory Lane Cafés

• Develop/trial alternative service provision for people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
Summary

Key outcomes:
• This evaluation has shown that Cafés were highly valued by clients
• Cafés had clear social, educational, and service system benefits for clients
• Modifications could be made to enhance the current service model to clients, and options be explored to expand Café provision to those who do not have access
Acknowledgements

• Victorian Department of Human Services for funding the evaluation
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• Alzheimer’s Australia Vic staff
• Advisory Group
Further information

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