

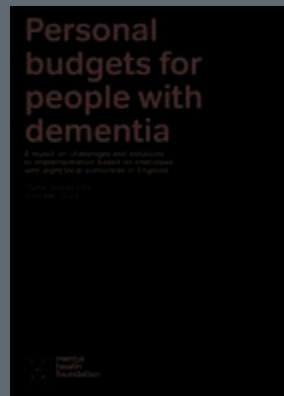
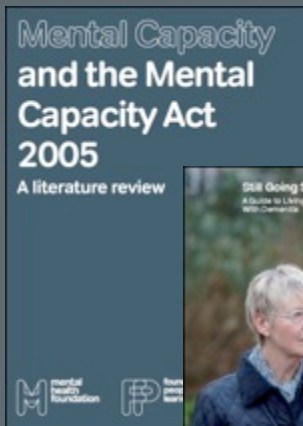
A Mental Health Foundation national inquiry  
*Dementia – what is truth?*

Exploring the real experience of people  
living with more severe dementia

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Head of Development & Later Life

# Mental Health Foundation

- UK charity
- Mental health problems, learning disabilities, dementia, public mental health – all ages
- Social research, service development, influencing, information and guidance



## Different realities – different truths?

- Believing that a deceased parent is alive and wanting to visit them
- Gaining comfort by holding a doll, believing it to be a real baby
- Not recognising a spouse or partner, or being convinced that a spouse or partner is an imposter or deceiving them
- Wishing to leave a care home and “go home” when the care home is where they now permanently live
- Seeking activities/roles that replicate jobs or activities the person did prior to developing dementia

# *Dementia – “delusions” or different realities?*



mental  
health  
foundation

## Some emerging themes and findings

- There is no single or right answer
- Context is crucial
- It's not simply a question of lying or telling the truth
- Professionals and family/friends – different perspectives
- Can the Mental Capacity Act help?
- Learning from elsewhere e.g. Hearing Voices Network

We want to hear your views

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DementiaInquiry>

[http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/research/  
dementia-truth-telling/](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/research/dementia-truth-telling/)



Talk to the person you are sat next to. Can you describe a situation where you or someone you know who lives with dementia is experiencing a different reality.

***1. What did it mean to the person living with dementia?***

***2. What was the most helpful response?***

- Telling the truth
- Reframing/redescribing the experience
- Distracting the person
- Avoiding discussing the experience
- Going along with the experience
- Lying about/reinforcing the experience
- It wasn't clear
- Something else