



# “On Stage In the Golden Age: Theatre for Healthy Ageing”

PROJECT NUMBER: 2023-1-RO01-KA220-ADU-000160973

## Activity 2 - Debate

### Topic: "Should people with early-stage dementia be supported to live independently – and for how long?"

DOCUMENT PRODUCED BY:

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ASOCIATIA HABILITAS  
CENTRU DE RESURSE  
DE TERAPIE PSIHOSOCIALE



SOCIETATEA ROMANA  
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## Active learning activity – description

Module	Module 1. The main mental health disorders in old age (cognitive decline, dementia and Alzheimer disease, other neurological disorders – e.g. multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease): symptoms, warning signs, stages
Chapter	Dementia
Name of activity	Debate topic " Should people with early-stage dementia be supported to live independently – and for how long?"
OBJECTIVE(S)	This debate aims to explore how people with early-stage dementia can be supported to live at home for as long as possible. It encourages discussion on the levels of support needed, ethical considerations, safety measures, and quality of life. Students will critically examine different degrees of autonomy and support, while also developing communication and decision-making skills.
METHODS	Debate, Guided discussion: In a structured debate, assigning clear roles to participants helps ensure an organized and dynamic discussion. By defining these roles, the debate becomes more structured, interactive, and productive, allowing participants to explore the complex issue of dementia and independent living from multiple perspectives. Guided discussion is important for gaining a better understanding of the activity and the emotions involved.
TIME ALLOCATED	45 minutes
RESOURCES NEEDED	Space for movement Paper, pens, basket to hold papers Timer Webinar platforms (e.g. Microsoft teams, zoom, google meet) Powerpoint presentation Instructor's Guide - word document Research & Key Topics to Explore - Participants Guide brochure



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INSTRUCTIONS*	<p>Introduction to the Debate</p> <p>Structuring the Debate</p> <p>Research and Preparation</p> <p>Debate Rules and Structure</p> <p>Real-World Reflection and Expert Insight</p> <p>Final Vote and Class Reflection</p>
REFERENCES	<p>Research &amp; Key Topics to Explore - Participants Guide brochure</p> <p>Fetherstonhaugh, D., Tarzia, L., &amp; Nay, R. (2019). "Being central to decision making means I am still here!" The essence of decision making for people with dementia. <i>Journal of Aging Studies</i>, 29, 14-22.</p> <p>Beattie, A., Daker-White, G., Gilliard, J., &amp; Means, R. (2004). 'How can they tell?' Ethical issues in dementia care research. <i>Aging and Mental Health</i>, 8(4), 373-379.</p> <p>Curtice, M., &amp; Exworthy, T. (2010). FREDA: A human rights-based approach to healthcare. <i>The Psychiatrist</i>, 34(4), 150-156.</p> <p>Rowe, M. A., Vandever, S. S., &amp; Greenblum, C. A. (2011). People with dementia who wander: Who are they and can they be kept safe? <i>American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease &amp; Other Dementias</i>, 26(3), 193-201.</p> <p>Lyketsos, C. G., Chen, L. S., &amp; Rabins, P. V. (2011). Dementia and wandering behavior: A significant issue for older adults and caregivers. <i>International Psychogeriatrics</i>, 23(1), 102-109.</p> <p>Harmer, B. J., &amp; Orrell, M. (2008). What is meaningful activity for people with dementia living in care homes? A comparison of the views of older people with dementia, staff, and family carers. <i>Aging and Mental Health</i>, 12(5), 548-558.</p> <p>Shankar, A., Hamer, M., McMunn, A., &amp; Steptoe, A. (2013). Social isolation and loneliness: Associations with cognitive function during 4 years of follow-up in the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing. <i>Psychosomatic Medicine</i>, 75(2), 161-170.</p>



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	Gaugler, J. E., Yu, F., Davila, H. W., & Shippee, T. (2015). Alzheimer's disease and nursing homes. Health Affairs, 34(7), 1147-1155.
HANDOUTS	Research & Key Topics to Explore - Participants Guide A5 brochure

\* Full instructions:

**Debate Topic:** "Should people with early-stage dementia be supported to live independently – and for how long?"

**Duration:** 45 minutes

This debate format incorporates interactive activities, research preparation, and structured discussions, while balancing time for student reflection and feedback.

Objective:

To foster a deep understanding of the ethical, medical, and safety considerations surrounding the independence of early-stage dementia patients. Students will develop critical thinking and communication skills by examining multiple perspectives on autonomy, safety, and quality of life.

## 1. Introduction to the Debate (3 minutes)

**Instructor's Role:**

- **Introduction** (1 minute): Provide an overview of the topic, explaining that the debate focuses on whether early-stage dementia patients, like "Anna," should be allowed to live independently.
- **Case Scenario** (1 minutes): Provide a short, detailed case of a 65-year-old woman named "Anna" recently diagnosed with early-stage Alzheimer's disease. She lives alone, is physically fit, and has no immediate family nearby. Although still independent, she has started experiencing memory lapses and confusion. Her physician suggests moving to an assisted living facility, but Anna wishes to remain at home.





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- **Pre-Debate Survey** (1 minute): Conduct an anonymous poll asking participants, “Should Anna be allowed to live independently?” with options “Yes,” “No,” and “Undecided.”

## 2. Structuring the Debate (3 minutes)

### Instructor’s Role:

- **Divide the Class:**  
*Group A (Pro):* Argue in favor of allowing dementia patients to live alone with appropriate support.  
*Group B (Con):* Argue against independent living, focusing on safety concerns and the need for supervision.
- **Assign Roles:**  
*Lead Speaker:* One student per group will present the opening argument.  
*Support Speakers:* Several students will present specific points (safety, ethical issues, emotional well-being).  
*Rebuttal Team:* Students tasked with responding to the opposing team’s arguments.  
*Observers/Judges:* A few students act as neutral observers to analyze and vote on the strongest arguments.

## 3. Research and Preparation (9 minutes)

### Instructor’s Role:

- **Provide a brief overview of relevant research materials, including:**  
Autonomy and ethics: patient rights vs. cognitive decline.  
Safety concerns: risks like wandering and accidents.  
Quality of life: balance independence with well-being.
- **Group Brainstorming:** Break into small groups to discuss strategies and evidence (ethical, medical, and practical) for their respective positions.

## 4. Debate Rules and Format (20 minutes)

- **Opening Statements (5 minutes)**





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Group A (Pro): Lead speaker presents arguments for Anna living independently, emphasizing autonomy and potential support systems (2.5 minutes).

Group B (Con): Lead speaker presents arguments against, stressing safety risks and cognitive decline (2.5 minutes).

- **Focused Arguments (6 minutes total, 3 minutes per group)**

***Autonomy & Ethics (1 minute each):***

Group A: Emphasizes patient rights and decision-making.

Group B: Focuses on cognitive decline impairing decision-making.

***Safety Concerns (1 minute each):***

Group A: Discusses technological support like monitoring systems.

Group B: Highlights accidents and harm risks.

***Quality of Life (1 minute each):***

Group A: Argues that living independently improves emotional well-being.

Group B: Argues that isolation and risks reduce quality of life.

- **Rebuttal Phase (4 minutes total, 2 minutes per group)**

Group A: Respond to safety concerns and explain how support systems could mitigate risks (2 minutes).

Group B: Respond by emphasizing the unpredictability of dementia and the limits of technology and remote monitoring (2 minutes).

- **Cross Examination & Q&A (5 minutes)**

Observers/Judges ask questions to challenge both groups' arguments, encouraging real-time responses and debate (5 minutes). This interactive session stimulates spontaneous thinking and deepens understanding.

## 5. Real-World Reflection and Expert Insight (5 minutes)

### Instructor's Role:

- **Provide insights** from real-world dementia care guidelines, including:





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*Professional Recommendations:* Share the latest research on when it is appropriate to encourage independent living versus transitioning to assisted care.

*Legal Considerations:* Discuss legal issues related to the responsibility of caregivers and medical professionals in cases where patients want to remain independent but show cognitive decline.

*Advanced Care Planning:* Introduce concepts of advanced care directives and how they apply to early-stage dementia patients.

- **Small Group Discussion (2 minutes):** Students reflect in small groups on the debate, discussing what influenced their thinking and brainstorming practical solutions for patients like Anna.

## 6. Final Vote & Class Reflection (5 minutes)

- **Final Poll:** Conduct a second live poll on the question, “Should Anna be allowed to live independently?” Compare this with the initial poll to assess shifts in perspective.
- **Instructor Feedback:** Provide constructive feedback on both sides’ arguments, discussing strengths and areas for improvement.

## Learning outcomes

- **Critical Thinking:** Students will critically evaluate both ethical and practical concerns related to dementia care, focusing on real-world implications.
- **Communication Skills:** They will refine their ability to present and defend a position, listen to opposing views, and engage in respectful discussion.
- **Decision-Making in Dementia Care:** They will learn how to make balanced, informed decisions that respect both patients’ autonomy and ensure safety.
- **Collaboration:** Through group work and discussion, students will understand the importance of multidisciplinary teamwork in dementia care.



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## Instructions for online format:

### 1. Introduction (3 min):

Share Anna’s case and conduct a pre-debate poll using tools like Zoom Polls or Mentimeter.

### 2. Structuring the debate (3 min):

Divide participants into breakout rooms: Pro, Con, and Observers/Judges. Assign roles and provide a collaborative document or whiteboard for notes.

### 3. Research and preparation (9 min):

Share resources via chat. Groups collaborate in breakout rooms to develop arguments and strategies.

### 4. Debate (20 min):

Rejoin the main room. Conduct each segment (opening statements, arguments, rebuttals, and Q&A). Observers ask questions via chat or unmute.

### 5. Real-World Reflection and Expert Insight (5 min):

Share expert insights with a brief slide or document. Students reflect in breakout rooms.

### 6. Final Vote & Class Reflection (5 min):

Conduct a post-debate poll and compare results. Provide quick feedback on arguments and areas for improvement.

Tips: Use timers, encourage cameras on, and foster engagement with reactions and concise speaking turns."

Thank participants for their engagement and encourage them to practice expressive body language in daily interactions.





## “ON STAGE IN THE GOLDEN AGE: THEATRE FOR HEALTHY AGEING”

PROJECT NUMBER: 2023 - 1 - RO01 - KA220 - ADU - 000160973

WEBSITE: <https://age-thea.eu/>

FACEBOOK: [On Stage on the Golden Age: Theatre for Healthy Ageing](#)

INSTAGRAM: [age.thea2023](#)



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