# Ageing Well Public Talk Series 2022/23

**Talk 3. Memory, Sense of Self and staying outdoors**

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### Slide 1: Five Pillars facilitating Ageing Well

* Nutrition
* Hydration
* Physical Stimulation
* Social Stimulation
* Cognitive Stimulation

### Slide 2: Ageing Brain - Cognitive ageing

* Diminished ability to remember names
* Diminished ability to find the correct word
* Diminished ability to remember where objects are located
* Diminished ability to concentrate
* Is this “normal”?

### Slide 3: Cognitive ageing

* Diminished ability to remember names
* Diminished ability to find the correct word
* Diminished ability to remember where objects are located
* Diminished ability to concentrate
* Is this “normal”?
* The answer is YES
* Normal/natural/physiological wear and tear of our cognitive system

### Slide 4:

* Tiredness of our systems – when young we have it too, but we can sleep it off – not so easy while ageing as many other things come together.
* Multitasking – stress and ageing enhance further changes on hormonal and cognitive and physical levels
* Stress management (different set of hormones)
* Ideal response:
* Good lifestyle choices can make these changes partially reversible – ‘*The Five Pillars of Ageing Well*’

### Slide 5: What else is normal for cognitive ageing?

* General slowing of neuronal and sensory processing & perception and increased spatial segmentation
* Becoming slower when responding or reacting (slower postural reflexes lead to higher risk of falls) and worsened orientation in space.
* Decreased complex, divided, and sustained attention, primary and working memory, retrieval of stored memory
* Shortened attention span (very important when it comes to memory)
* Accentuation of certain personality traits
* Personality traits & chronic conditions may become more prominent

### Slide 6: Are we winners by choice?

* Nutrition
* Hydration
* Physical Stimulation
* Social Stimulation
* Cognitive Stimulation

### Slide 7:

* The brain is capable of producing new brain cells at any age (at much slower rate when older), but still significant memory loss is not an inevitable result of aging.
* But just as it is with muscle strength, we need to exercise /stimulate it if we don’t want to lose the function.
* Our lifestyle, health habits, and daily activities have a huge impact on the health of our brain.
* Whatever our age, there are [many ways we can improve our cognitive skills](https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/how-to-improve-your-memory.htm), attention span and prevent memory loss.

### Slide 8:

* Furthermore, many mental abilities are largely unaffected by normal aging, such as:
* Our ability to do the things we’ve always done and continue to do often
* The wisdom and knowledge we’ve acquired from life experience
* Our innate common sense and ability to form reasonable arguments and judgments
* For most people, occasional lapses in memory are a normal part of the aging process, not a warning sign of serious mental deterioration or the onset of dementia.

### Slide 9: Main causes of age-related memory loss

* The hippocampus, a region of the brain involved in the formation and retrieval of memories, often deteriorates with age.
* Hormones and proteins that protect and repair brain cells and stimulate neural growth also decline with age.
* Older people often experience decreased regular blood flow to the brain, which can impair memory and lead to changes in cognitive skills - lack of exercise
* Dehydration
* Sleeplessness

### Slide 10:

* Occasionally forgetting where we left things we use regularly, such as glasses or keys.
* Forgetting names of acquaintances or blocking one memory with a similar one, such as calling a grandson by the son’s name.
* Occasionally forgetting an appointment or walking into a room and forgetting why we entered.
* Becoming easily distracted or having trouble remembering what we’ve just read, or the details of a conversation.
* Not quite being able to retrieve information we have “on the tip of our tongue.”
* More on differences between dementia, age related memory decline and reversible causes for memory loss - in our talk Ageing Brain [The ageing brain (Dr Jitka Vseteckova OU & Prof Marco Calabria)](http://stadium.open.ac.uk/stadia/preview.php?whichevent=3634&s=31)

### Slide 11:

* Important to do it all when we are still well!
* Sometimes forgetting becomes more of a pathological problem and might lead to us losing our Sense of Self

### Slide 12: Introduction: Dr Helen Joannidi, Clinical Psychologist

### Slide 13: What is the Self? – some theories

* Descartes – cogito, ergo sum I am a thinking being
* Freud – id (biological needs / drives), ego (will),
* superego (morality, rationality/consciousness)
* Jung – The unified consciousness and unconsciousness – the central force that guides our development
* Self-Concept

### Slide 14: The Self (Self Concept) – Who Am I? An Exercise…

* On a piece of paper, write ‘who am I?’. See if you can answer this question in 5 words.
* When you have your 5 words, chose the most important one, and share it in the chat.

### Slide 15: What can make up our sense of self?

* Our body image
* Our friends / relationships / community
* Our job / career
* Our past-times / hobbies / activities
* Our taste in music / food / art
* Our talents and skills
* Our culture / language
* Our family ‘rules’
* Our Spirituality / Religion
* Our personality
* How we express ourselves through clothes
* Our deep-held beliefs and values

### Slide 16: Why beliefs and values are important in understanding our sense of self

* Beliefs and values can be formed early in life and held for life
* Are connected to our Culture & family
* May be unconscious
* The longer or more deeply held, the more we hold on to them

### Slide 17: Self-Concept and Self Esteem

* How do you think self-concept is related to self-esteem? Write in the comments.

### Slide 18: How can Aging affect the Sense of Self?

* Changes associated with this time of life – changing body, life and family situation
* Changes that are associated with loss can affect our sense of self the most:
* Retirement – loss of job & value of this
* Loss of some physical or cognitive abilities
* Loss of activities arising from this on activities
* Loss of partner

### Slide 19: Practicing Compassion towards Self

* Compassion is defined by being moved to help or support someone whom you perceive to be struggling or in need
* This could be others or ourselves
* It is normally easier to have compassion for others, but self-compassion is very important.
* Compassion is acting towards ourselves with kindness and love
* Contrary to a common fear, self-compassion does not inflate ego, but helps us connect with our deeper, ‘wise and nurturing’ self
* This may be as simple as buying ourselves flowers, making a cup of tea, going for a walk when we feel we need it, or seeing friends

### Slide 20: Compassion – a practice

* Here is a simple compassion practice that can be done to help connect with and grow a sense of compassion.
* First of all, make yourself comfortable with a good posture, and closing your eyes if that is comfortable.
* When you are settled, listen to the guidance

### Slide 21: How to Build a sense of Self in Aging

* Keep active and engaged
* Keep socializing
* Discover new things
* Reminisce!
* Be creative!
* Record your story
* Connects with the 5 pillars of social, cognitive & physical stimulation

### Slide 22: What happens when our Sense of Self is challenged?

* Feeling of loss
* Feeling of disorientation / confusion
* Feeling of anger / resentment
* Feeling of fear
* Feeling of isolation / embarrassment

### Slide 23: The Opportunity of a Challenge to Self

* From Acceptance and Commitment Therapy – our pain is in our values – we cannot have one without the other
* The idea of breakdown as breakthrough
* The chance to start again – be a ’new’ me
* Connect with what is important – the part of us that endures through change

### Slide 24: How mindfulness can help

* Practicing mindfulness is about being present in this moment, and bringing our awareness to our senses
* This can help give our mind a focus, and a rest from worrying about the future, or from dwelling on difficult past events
* Mindfulness can help with a sense of peace and calm
* Mindfulness can be a useful coping mechanism when we feel challenged, uncertain, confused, upset or distressed
* By focusing on the present, we can ‘come back to ourselves’
* Mindfulness can also help connect us with our ‘wise selves’

### Slide 25: Mindfulness – a practice

* Here is a simple practice that is an introduction to experiencing mindfulness.
* Find your comfortable position again and close your eyes.
* Listen to the guidance.

### Slide 26: Top Tips to Take Home – how to preserve a sense of self

* Keep active and engaged with life – move!
* Keep socializing
* Discover new things
* Reminisce! – music, photos, stories
* Be creative! Dance! Draw!
* Record your story
* Be guided by your beliefs and values, as these make us what we are
* If things are difficult or challenging, remember to practice self-compassion or mindfulness, to help to connect with the deep inner ‘wise self’.

The benefits of the outdoors for preserving our Sense of Self

### Slide 26: Mindfulness and the outdoors

* The great outdoors is a wonderful place to practise mindfulness.
* Remember to take notice of your surroundings.
* Observing seasonal changes e.g., life cycle of a tree.
* Walking therapy.
* Learning something new from nature.

### Slide 27: A sensory experience outdoors

* Full sensory experience fosters a feeling of being and being in the moment.
* Imagine walking through wet grass, brushing past leaves, and smelling damp earth.
* Reduction in anxiety and improved concentration.
* Prompting shared experiences from common viewpoint.
* Taking notice of changes in the environment.

### Slide 28: Volunteering

* Over 200 volunteers.
* Events, outdoor learning, ranger, and practical conservation roles.
* Many volunteers are retired and help out in their local park.
* Celebrating achievements.
* 31% volunteers serving >5 years
* 96% feel valued.
* Varied reasons for deciding to volunteer.
* Community days throughout the year.

### Slide 29: 5 Ways Café at St. Andrew’s Church

* Started as ‘Dementia Friendly Café’ in 2019. Rebranded as 5 Ways Café.
* Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month, 11am-1pm.
* Community café where all are welcome, including people experiencing dementia, their carers and families.
* Volunteers are Dementia Friends.
* Guided walks of the parkland and village.
* Impacted by covid.
* Open University research on barriers and facilitators to walking via The Walking Programme.

### Slide 30: Dementia Friendly Resources: Spotter Sheet

* Self-guided, free resource.
* Developed in collaboration with the OU.
* Return to childhood spotting games, e.g. I-Spy.
* Full sensory experience.
* What can you see, smell, hear and feel in the park?

[The Parks Trust – Spotter Sheet](https://www.theparkstrust.com/spottersheet)

### Slide 31: Dementia Friendly Resources: Sensory Scavenger Hunt

* Take notice and collect things from around the park.
* Grown-ups enjoy scavenger hunts too!
* Muti-generational.

### [The Parks Trust – Sensory Hunt](https://www.theparkstrust.com/sensoryhunt)

### Slide 32: Dementia Friendly Resources: Spring from Home

* Savour the spring season from home.
* Digital and printed versions.
* Distribution via food parcels and to local care homes.
* Volunteer effort from home – connecting people.

### [The Parks Trust – Spring from Home](https://www.theparkstrust.com/springfromhome)

### Slide 33: Parks Trust Events and Activities

* 6000 acres of parks, woodlands, lakes, and green spaces = 25% of MK city.
* Discovery Strolls
* Self-guided walks
* 5 Ways Café
* Outdoor Learning activities available to book or contact team directly: [outdoorlearning@theparkstrust.com](mailto:outdoorlearning@theparkstrust.com) on behalf of a group, care home or other organisation.

### Slide 34: 3 things to take away

* Try to get outside at least once a day, wherever you live.
* Consider volunteering as a way of ageing well and maintaining a sense of self.
* Look at your local green space with fresh eyes, taking notice of your surroundings.

### Slide 35: Normal age-related memory changes

* Able to function independently and pursue normal activities, despite occasional memory lapses
* Able to recall and describe incidents of forgetfulness
* May pause to remember directions, but doesn’t get lost in familiar places
* Occasional difficulty finding the right word, but no trouble holding a conversation
* Judgment and decision-making ability the same as always

### Symptoms that may indicate dementia

* Difficulty performing simple tasks (paying bills, dressing appropriately, washing up); forgetting how to do things you’ve done many times
* Unable to recall or describe specific instances where memory loss caused problems
* Gets lost or disoriented even in familiar places; unable to follow directions
* Words are frequently forgotten, misused, or garbled, Repeats phrases and stories in same conversation
* Trouble making choices; May show poor judgment or behave in socially inappropriate ways

### Slide 35: Lifestyles that combine cognitively stimulating activities with physical activities and rich social networks may provide the best odds of preserving cognitive function in old age (La Rue, 2010).

**What is your experience?**

Make time for cognitively stimulating activities that you’ve always enjoyed. - Continuing favourite activities can ensure sustainability of cognitive stimulation. Long-term exposure to cognitive stimulation may be needed for practical functional benefits.

Add some new cognitive challenges, as your time and enjoyment permit Trying new activities may enhance brain plasticity by requiring new learning or development of new cognitive strategies **MUSIC LESSONS, LEARNING NEW LANGUAGE, AQUA**

Aim to engage in cognitively stimulating activities several times a week or more…generate some “*mental sweat*.” - Current knowledge does not permit a prescription for how often or how long individuals should engage in cognitively stimulating activities. However, epidemiologic studies suggest that more is better, within clinically reasonable limits.

Be aware that there is no one cognitive activity, or combination of activities, that is uniquely good for reducing AD risk. - Many different types of cognitively stimulating activities have been associated with preserved cognitive skill. There are no data yet to show that cognitive activities prevent or delay AD.

Social interactions are a great way to stimulate the mind. - Group training of cognitive skills has been shown to be effective in sharpening specific cognitive skills, and broader social networks have been associated with reduced AD risk.

### Thank you

For further information please get in touch

Tel: 01908 233600  
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**Thank you www.for joining today were happy to take any questions**

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**Next Talk 4. Series 2022/23 –** [***Equality, diversity and inclusion in access and provision of care in health services - Dr Carlos Moreno Leguizamon -***](http://stadium.open.ac.uk/stadia/preview.php?whichevent=3701&s=31) ***Dec 14th, 2022***

Summary of related resources to The Ageing Well Public Talk Series

Podcasts

[Vseteckova J & King J (2020) COVID-19 Interview podcast for The Retirement Café: ‘*Ageing Well Under Lockdown’*](https://theretirementcafe.co.uk/077-dr-jitka/)

[Vseteckova J & Broad E  (2020) Keep Me Walking - researching with people living with dementia and their carers - Podcast – Open University in collaboration with The Parks Trust](https://youtu.be/0QHAS88C-LU)

[Vseteckova J (2020)  Podcast - areas for research with The Open University](https://youtu.be/vE6J9J_ovOM)

[Broad E & Methley A & Vseteckova J (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust - Spotter sheet and mindful walking.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dq5OXEBk3CA&feature=youtu.be)

[Methley A, Broad E, Vseteckova J (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  Walking therapy](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M59FvUrqKH8)

[Vseteckova J, Methely A, Broad (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Understanding our memory](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WGfWrQr1AU)

[Broad E & Methley A & Vseteckova J (2021) Preventing brain decline while ageing](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=965w7K8XPdo)

The above podcasts can be also seen on [**The Parks Trust YouTube Channel**](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyDv-iwd8UZkub6qyDduaixKj1ySfKcUk)

OpenLearn Resources:

[Vseteckova J (2020) Ageing Well Public Talk Series](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/the-ageing-well-public-talks)

[Vseteckova J (2019) 5 reasons why exercising outdoors is great for people who have dementia](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/5-reasons-why-exercising-outdoors-great-people-who-have-dementia)

[Vseteckova J (2019) Depression, mood and exercise](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/depression-mood-and-exercise?in_menu=622279)

[Vseteckova J (2019) Five Pillars for Ageing Well](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/five-pillars-ageing-well)

[Vseteckova J (2020) Ageing Brain](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/the-ageing-brain-use-it-or-lose-it)

[Vseteckova J (2020) Ageing Well Public Talks Series II. Plan for 2020 – 2021](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/ageing-well-public-talk-series-plan-2020/2021)

[Vseteckova J (2020) Walking the Parks with The OU and The Parks Trust](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/keep-me-walking-people-living-dementia-and-outdoor-environments)

[Vseteckova J, Borgstrom E, Whitehouse A, Kent A, Hart A (2021) Advance Care Planning (ACP ) - Discuss, Decide, Document and Share Advance Care Planning (ACP )](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/advance-care-planning-acp-discuss-decide-document-and-share)

[Vseteckova J, Methley A, Lucassen M (2021) The benefits of mindfulness and five common myths surrounding it](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/the-benefits-mindfulness-and-five-common-myths-surrounding-it)

[Vseteckova J, Broad E, Andrew V (2021) The impact of walking and socialising through 5 Ways Café on people living with dementia and their carers: A volunteer’s perspective](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/the-impact-walking-and-socialising-through-5-ways-cafe-on-people-living-dementia-and-their-carers)

[Vseteckova J, Methley A, Lucassen M (2021) The benefits of mindfulness and five common myths surrounding it](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/the-benefits-mindfulness-and-five-common-myths-surrounding-it)

[Methley A, Vseteckova J, Broad E (2021) Outdoor Therapy: The Benefits of Walking and Talking](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/outdoor-therapy-the-benefits-walking-and-talking)

[Vseteckova J, Methley a, Broad E (2021) What happens to our brain as we age and how we can stop the fast decline](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/what-happens-our-brain-we-age-and-how-can-we-stop-the-decline)

[Methley A & Vseteckova J & Jones K (2020) Green & Blue & Outdoor spaces](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/the-benefits-outdoor-green-and-blue-spaces)

[Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad E (2021) Understanding our memory  What do we need to know about our memory](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/what-do-we-need-know-about-our-memory)

Araya Y , Broad E, Vseteckova J (2022) [Engaging](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/mental-health/engaging-our-environment-what-are-the-benefits) with our environment

[Vseteckova J (2022) Pharmacotherapy while ageing](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/pharmacotherapy-while-ageing)

[Mehta S (2022) Medicines and personalisation while ageing](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/medicines-and-personalisation)

[Gale B (2022) How can we prepare for death while ageing?](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/course/view.php?id=14617)

COVID-19 related

[Vseteckova J, How to age well, while self-isolating (2020)](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/how-age-well-while-self-isolating)

[Vseteckova J, (2020) SHORT FILM - Ageing Well in Self-Isolation](https://youtu.be/LU4pXFgcGos)

[Vseteckova J, (2020) ANIMATION - Keeping healthy in Self-Isolation](https://youtu.be/M9yUC-MUugA)

[Vseteckova J et al (2020) COVID-19 The effects of self-isolation and lack of physical activity on carers](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/the-effects-self-isolation-and-lack-physical-activity-on-carers)

[Taverner P, Larkin M, Vseteckova J, et al.  (2020) Supporting adult carers during COVID-19 pandemic](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/how-can-adult-carers-get-the-best-support-during-covid-19-pandemic-and-beyond)

[Robb M, Penson M, Vseteckova J, et al.  (2020) Young carers, COVID-19 and physical activity](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/young-carerscovid-19-and-physical-activity)

[Penson M, Vseteckova J et al. (2020) Older Carers, COVID-19 and Physical Activity](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/social-care-social-work/older-carers-covid-19-and-physical-activity)

[Vseteckova J  & Methley A  (2020) Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) to help carers in challenging COVID-19 times](https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/how-can-acceptance-and-commitment-therapy-help-carers-challenging-times-such-the-covid-19-pandemic)

**ORDO Collections**

[‘*Ageing Well Public Talks*’ Series 2022/2023 repository on ORDO Collections](https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing_Well_Public_Talks_2022-23/5982802)

[‘*Ageing Well Public Talks*’ Series 2021/2022 repository on ORDO Collections](https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing_Well_Public_Talks_2021-22/5493216)

[‘*Ageing Well Public Talks*’ Series 2020/2021 repository on ORDO Collections](https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing_Well_Public_Talks_2020-21/5122166)

[‘*Ageing Well Public Talks*’ Series 2019/2020 repository on ORDO Collections](https://doi.org/10.21954/ou.rd.c.4716437.v1)

[OpenLearnCreate Course on ‘*Ageing Well’ 2019/2020*](https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=5016)

[Home exercise no equipment – no problem (](https://selsdotlife.wordpress.com/2020/04/01/home-exercises-for-older-adults-no-equipment-no-problem/)*[Blog](https://selsdotlife.wordpress.com/2020/04/01/home-exercises-for-older-adults-no-equipment-no-problem/)*[)](https://selsdotlife.wordpress.com/2020/04/01/home-exercises-for-older-adults-no-equipment-no-problem/)