

## Activity: Each person is different: so get to know me

Think about a person with dementia who you are currently working with. Look up the table below: it shows those formative social identity years for people born in the first half of the 20th century.

Year of birth	Age in 2009	Year when 15 years old	Year when 25 years old
1900	109	1915	1925
1905	102	1920	1930
1910	99	1925	1935
1915	94	1930	1940
1920	89	1935	1945
1925	84	1940	1950
1930	79	1945	1955
1935	74	1950	1960
1940	69	1955	1965
1945	64	1960	1970
1950	59	1965	1975

Work out the year that the person was 18 years old. For example, a person born in 1920 would have been 18 in 1938. Try looking up 'popular songs in 1938' using any search engine on the internet. You'll come up with many websites that will give you lots of songs (for example, [www.popculturemadness.com](http://www.popculturemadness.com) and <http://en.wikipedia.org> will give you some good lists and lots of information). You can also find recordings of the most popular songs (for example, using [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com))

When you have some time to relax with this person, try playing it to them. It could open doors to getting to know this person better.

It's also worth bearing in mind that, for many people of these generations, cinema going and films were something that was very popular. Again, look up 'popular films in 1938' on an internet search engine and see what comes up. Many of these movies are available now and can form the basis of an enjoyable activity together. Films also help us appreciate what the era was like when our clients were in their formative years.

If someone spent their younger years in a different country or culture you can also use the internet to find out more about this.

Although many of the memories that music and films evoke may be happy, be prepared for the fact that some may be associated with unhappy times. When you play a new song for the first time make sure that you have given yourself enough time to be with the person in case this happens so that you can offer comfort and support.

Over time you can build up a personal repertoire of songs for the person that engenders good feelings that you can share together.

#### Trainer's notes

This activity is a good one to do if you are working with a group of care staff over time. If you have a group of staff who are a similar age group ask them to try to remember what was number one in the pop charts when they were sixteen.

Once people start to reminisce about the songs, they'll also start talking about the clothes, their love-life and aspirations at this age. This exercise reinforces why it might be important that people who they care for get the opportunity to enjoy the feeling of remembering songs with others.

Ask the group to do their 'internet homework' on a couple of people they work with and share their experiences at a later session of what impact sharing the songs had with that person.