

## **Activity: Deaf blindness and dementia**

You will need someone else to join you to do this activity properly. To begin, one person closes their eyes. The other must communicate three things about themselves without speaking.

What sort of things can you communicate?

How did you do this?

What were the limits on the type of information you can convey?

How did it feel trying to work out what the person was trying to tell you?

Now imagine you had dementia. How might this make this activity even more difficult?

### **Trainer's notes**

This activity can be a useful one to generate discussion, understanding and empathy among a group of care staff. You will need a flip chart and pens if you want to capture participants' responses.

Split the group into pairs and ask them to nominate one person as 'deafblind' and one as a communicator. Give them five minutes to do the activity. Then ask them to swap roles, without discussion and carry out activity again.

In the same pairs ask them to discuss their feelings during the activity, and to consider the questions posed. It might be useful for people to re-do the activity with these questions in mind.

Lead a discussion on thoughts and emotions triggered by this exercise, and finally bring this together and ask how this might impact on the way staff support individuals with dementia. Some key questions to ask might be:

How will you seek to ensure you know about people's hearing and sight, and/or communication needs before working with them?

How will this activity impact the importance you place on identifying whether a person has a hearing and a vision loss?

How might you work differently with the people you support following this activity?

What are some ideas for activities for people with dementia and dual sensory loss?